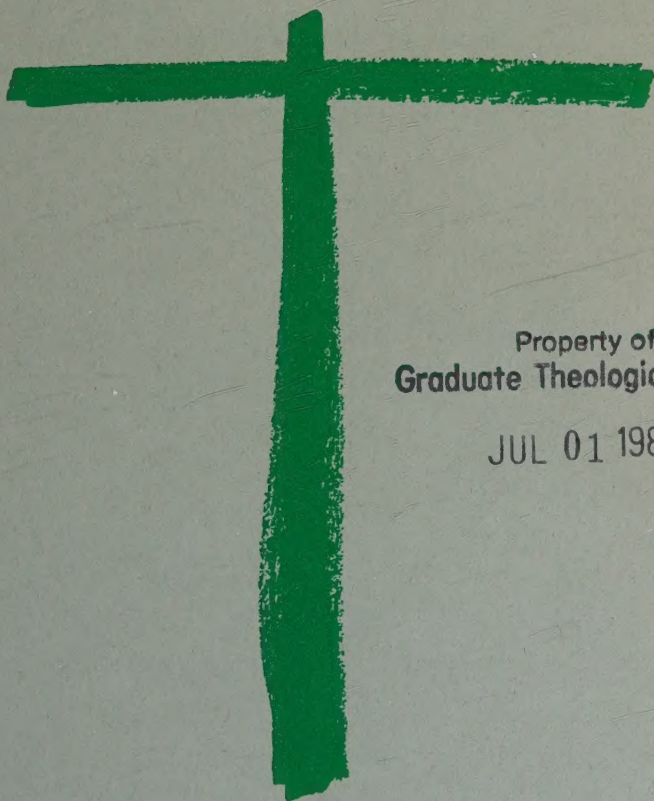


Spirit and Church

The Franciscan



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The Society of Saint Francis

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Pax et bonum

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The Perpetual Chore!

William Henry and Benedict are here seen at work at Hilfield, during a Conference or Chapter.



Spirit and Church



THE SPIRIT is the driving, energetic, inspiring force of God. But the church is a great, lumbering, human organisation in constant need of renewal. The sociologists tell us that the function of religion in society is to maintain the status quo, confirming and passing on the traditional values of society. Religion therefore always tends to be opposed to change. Under threat from secularism or anti-religious propaganda, a church will tend to close ranks and become rigidly conservative. But there is another tendency in religion, which the sociologists call charismatic, typified by inspired individuals, like the prophets of Israel, like Mahomet, and like our own Lord Jesus Christ.

So the church is never allowed to become completely ossified. The charismatic element is there at its foundation, in its Founder himself. And in every age renewal starts again. As we approach the end of the twentieth century, we can look back with deep gratitude at the marvellous signs of the work of the unseen Spirit of God, which have happened in our own generation. Most people, perhaps, will think first of the Ecumenical Movement, which grew out of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, and which Archbishop William Temple called 'the great new fact of our time'. But it was in the Roman Catholic Church that the working of the Holy Spirit was most spectacular. With the Second Vatican Council the life-giving Spirit, too long pent up in rigid dogmatism and centralised control, at last burst forth, and the fruits of the Spirit of love and joy abound.

Renewal does not necessarily mean change. Eastern Orthodoxy is charismatic in its spirituality and very conservative in its tradition at one and the same time, and many readers will be deeply grateful to Bishop Kallistos for conveying this so well. But this is at the level of the inner life of the church, both individual and corporate. The structures of society do need to be changed if the Kingdom of God is to be realised in our midst, and those who pursue the path of Liberation Theology follow in the steps of the Son of Man who suffered death before he was raised to new life and shed abroad the Spirit at Pentecost.

For the working of the Spirit must be accepted. Anglicans can be very threatened by what he is doing. We are aghast at the thought of empty parish churches and burgeoning house churches. But let us not be afraid, for the Spirit is love. What we must do is listen: 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' (Rev. 2.7).

The Minister General's Letter

My dear friends,

Trinidad—Islands in the sun; carefree Caribbeans; laughter, and calypso; and emigrants to England. The travel agents paint one picture, the reality is another. I first visited Trinidad fifty years ago as a 'tourist', arriving on a banana boat from England. This time I flew in from Miami.

I thought I might remember a bit what it was like, but half a century later the changes are vast. Independence and self-government went hand-in-hand with an oil boom, and an economy to match. Office blocks, schools, major roads have transformed Port of Spain. Television is excellent on a B.B.C. model, and at the time of my visit of particular significance. Recent elections have overthrown the government which had been in power for a long time. A new parliament was sworn in with only three of the old seats being retained. There was a sense of youthful enterprise coupled with a remarkable range of gifted ministers. The ceremonies, as I watched them on T.V., reflected a Westminster model: fanfares, slow procession of solemn persons, a speaker in wig and gown. A lot of Trinidad life suggests cross-fertilisation with the British way of life, as former colonisation is replaced with emigration.

We have flourishing groups of tertiaries and companions, and Desmond, alone at present, of the First Order. His parish in Princetown is a large one, with several churches and schools. The range of his interests and concerns is astonishing. The rectory, like all Franciscan houses, has a door-bell that is never silent, and a constant stream of visitors come in for advice or help, for a meal to eat there and then, or take away.

The church is large and crowded, and the liturgy ordered with meticulous pride and care—it is also very long with rousing chords sweeping us all into choruses, hymns, and chants! The church was packed for the annual service of St Stephen's School, and the newly appointed Minister for Education came to give the address. The school—a large secondary school—has pictures of Bob Runcie proudly on display, and a 'Michael Ramsey Hall'! The impact of Franciscans in Trinidad has been strong, and the witness of a life of prayer and service is deeply appreciated. I was glad to share in it for a while.

No doubt this, in common with all the other houses I have visited throughout the world, will be reviewed this summer when the Society,

as a whole, sends its representatives to England for a series of meetings. First, there will be the meeting of Ministers. This is an annual event, made much more significant this year by recent elections. We now have three new Provincial Ministers. Brother Daniel, who comes originally from County Durham in England, is now the Provincial Minister for Australia and New Zealand. A lot of his experience has been in the Pacific Islands—so he has much to bring to the job. Brother Rodney, who comes from Australia, is now the Minister in America—so once again there is some real exchange of ideas and experience; and Brother Randolph is the new Minister in the Pacific Islands. He comes from Dogura and expects to be ordained priest in the Cathedral there later this year. He has recently been Guardian at Popondetta, not far from the Friary at Haruro.

The brothers they replace, Robert Hugh, Brian, and Philip, all deserve our unstinted praise and gratitude. The Society in these provinces have all been undergoing radical change in different ways. The path has not always been easy, and the sensitive and loving care they have all shown is typical, both of the men who first nurtured them in the Franciscan ideal but also, of their personal capacity to make their own the unselfish love of the brethren, and loyalty in faith to Our Lord, and the spirit of S. Francis. They all, in a certain sense, belong to a particular generation which, in the short history of our Society, is now handing on to brothers who will have to exercise the same authority under conditions which have changed or are changing. To retain a tradition without fossilising it is always a subtle business. To build on the best of the past demands always discernment to recognize and retain what *is* best, and that calls for a sensitivity and loving concern which never loses sight of the needs and dignity of individual brothers and sisters. To be innovative, imaginative, creative, but caring and patient, are all gifts we might pray for as we remember the lonely men at the top.

There are lonely women as well. We were all delighted to hear that Sister Cecilia has been elected the Mother of the Sisters of the First Order. She is the pioneer of the sisters in America, and the stability of the house in San Francisco is in no small part due to her tenacity. For the present she will remain there, but we expect to see her in New Zealand and England from time to time. Sister Teresa too is heading up the house where the sisters are now supporting brothers in Auckland.

So the Ministers' Meetings will have a number of new faces. That will be followed by the Chapter of the First Order Brothers and Sisters,

meeting for six days, sometimes together, sometimes separately. This Chapter takes place every three years, and is a major review of all our work. A time to make decisions, plan for the future; and representatives from all the Provinces will be present at that. Then there will be an International Chapter of the Third Order. Once again, representatives will come from all over the world. This is the second such meeting, held every five years. Since the last time they gathered, in California, the Third Order has grown greatly; and this Chapter will be thinking about the consequences of the growth.

For three days we plan to have meetings at which our Second Order can join us, so that all three Orders can be together discussing topics of mutual concern and enjoying our solidarity as one Franciscan Family.

Indeed, it is that spirit of S. Francis, the spirit of Assisi, of Peace, reconciliation and renewal, which I hope we shall capture afresh, not for ourselves alone, but to share freely with the Franciscan Brothers and Sisters throughout the world. I know you will remember us all in your prayers.

Pax et Bonum!

Your affectionate brother

+ Michael SSF.

Minister General

Chronicle

Brother Anselm writes:

EUROPEAN PROVINCE

'Start praying now for us as plans are made and later as people come from all over the world for these meetings which are so important to our life...' a quotation which you may recognise—the words stand at the end of my contribution to the January number.

They refer to the June-July meetings of the First Order SSF brothers and sisters, and the Third Order, in their various chapters at which are represented the provinces from around the world. And of course, they *are* important, and without them we would fall apart. But...

Let me tell you about my problem. It's not a new problem, and I know that it's nothing special—lots of people have it. To put it at its bluntest, I don't like meetings. That is to say, there is a bit of me which always in anticipation, and sometimes 'on the night', resents and is bored by big occasions and meetings. Over the years I have learned not to be surprised at this, and to cope with it rather more successfully than once I did, but it shows no signs of going away. I suppose I could have therapy and be cured, and it would go away—I would discover that I was taken as a babe in arms to a missionary meeting (Mother was certainly capable of that), hence the phobia—just remember that and all will be well—or, if I'm an extreme case, stop going to meetings (don't tempt me!).

Or—should I leave the fascinating subject of me out of it, and wonder and ponder on what God is trying to say to me through these feelings, although they belong admittedly to my flawed humanity? Can he not subject them to his purposes, and through them make himself heard? Perhaps as well as the rage of the infant whose will has been crossed, there is a feeble echo of the anger of Jesus as he drove the money changers from the temple.

He, and his follower Francis, did not consciously organise anything—the church, the order sprang up in the wake of their lives, and had to be coped with. Their own priorities were quite different, and have to be summed up with words like 'God's Kingdom', or 'Love', or 'Gospel'. It's because such concerns could not remain a private matter, because in their times and places they caught on in a big way, that organisation became necessary—not good, not bad, but necessary. Necessary, and dangerous, for it easily becomes an end rather than a means to an end. It is not 'God's Kingdom'—it is not 'Love'—it is not 'Gospel'. In the end, I have to try to hold on to that perspective.

On the desk is a reminder—'phone for muck'—in front of me snaps of brothers and sisters collected over the years—on one side of the house, the school in whose nursery class I help, on the other, the old people's home where I shall call in this afternoon—in the house, my brothers, and the chapel where together we pray. But, without the support of the organisation, the bookkeeping, the novitiate, the benefactors, it would all vanish away. And, the meetings. I feel better!

Among those coming to our province for the June meetings will be no fewer than three newly elected Ministers Provincial—Rodney from the USA, Daniel from Australia and New Zealand, and Randolph from the Pacific Islands. I know that they and the sisters and brothers who will

come from those provinces will travel around before and after the meetings and get a wonderful welcome, in many instances from readers of the Franciscan.

People. In November after our last news for the Chronicle was written, Jannafer returned to us from Stepney. She settled in quickly and is proving an efficient and helpful guest sister, much appreciated by us and the guests. In the same month Pat Hawkins, a social worker in Exeter, joined us. February was a month of events. On the 19th Pat (now known as Patricia) was noviced; on the 21st Pamela Joy made her Life Profession at Hilfield; and on the 27th Angela Helen came back to make her First Profession here, it was good to have her here for that and her retreat. We thank God for these three and ask Him to bless them as they continue in their community life.

Sister Gabriel remains well and happy in the Hermitage, and produces vast amounts of marmalade for us. Apart from her there are nine sisters in the household. With no further changes since November and a comparatively quiet guest house during the winter months we have had the chance to grow together as a group, and there has been some noticeable growth as we worked through some of the changes made necessary because of the smaller number here.

One step forward has been to do away with a 'work list' and to establish a team, Pamela Joy, Jacqueline, Clare Veronica and Patricia, who together cover the care of our elderly residents and the running of the kitchen. There have been some teething problems but there is developing a good team spirit and cooperative attitude as they have become more accustomed to a flexible approach.

Nan has continued a regular novice study programme, including the monthly joint courses with Samuel and the Hilfield novices, and the professed sisters have supported this well by their willingness to cover for the novices' study times.

Buildings and Changes. At the end of last year we closed the convent kitchen and refectory and now have our meals in the Education Project room, surrounded by the permanent exhibition. This has been much appreciated by many of our guests; there is more space, the room is lighter and is pleasant; and it has certainly lessened the work load and made it easier to be within call for our residents. Some of us miss the convent refectory, though accept the practicality of the present situation. The refectory has been refurnished as an informal sitting/reading/writing area, while the convent kitchen now houses all the art and craft materials as well as the duplicator. We are trying to keep the convent building as a quiet house, now that most people work across the road, and in December and January one by one the sisters moved out of the 'cell' block to the convent where we all now sleep away from our work areas. At the time of writing we are waiting the arrival of workmen who are going to refurbish the cell block, with extra facilities and improved heating, and if all goes according to plan this should be done and the block (almost) ready for use again, for guests, by the time you read this. It will enable us to be more flexible with our guest situation, and again lighten the work load a little.

Ministry. We have a busy year ahead. We have many groups booked in, either resident or for the day which sisters will be leading, and a number of local outside engagements as well as being involved in Mission teams, and every member of the house has some such work to look forward to, though some are more heavily committed than others, notably Alison

Mary, Hilary and Nan. Barbara (now hoping to have her cataract dealt with before the end of the year) continues in her involvement with the parish church and some visiting in South Petherton, and to cope well with the never ending laundry.

Third Order. Our links with the T.O. continue and have been strengthened. In January Glenys Blewett moved into what was originally intended as a night nurse's flat when the ward was built, but which hasn't been used as such previously. Glenys has been a regular visitor for some years, both on her own and as a member of the Somerset T.O. group. She retired from her job as a school matron at Christmas and now does four nights on duty weekly. She shares some meals with us, but otherwise lives her own life independently. Our other regular night nurse Margaret Brown is also a member of T.O. They both get on happily with our three residents, who remain well on the whole although Gertrude Whitehill at 94 is getting noticeably more frail.

Looking Ahead to the summer, and our Open Day on June 13, we now have the added joy of knowing that Cecilia will be with us for that and hopefully for the whole of June.

GLASSHAMPTON The life of Glasshampton always takes on a new feel when a new group of four novices come to share our life. This time it is Paul Anthony, Brendan, Bruno and Jacob—and sure enough there is a distinct difference in the life of the house!

Paul A works in the kitchen—and he does well at it. Brendan and Jacob have teamed up with Gregory in garden and house, both giving some of their time to help Bruno with the roof insulation which is now taking place after installation of the LPG heating system. Bruno also keeps the guest house clean, and is willing to fill the role of 'Mr Fixit' generally with his own inimitable humour!

Christopher has come to live at Glasshampton. He has taken up cooking with Paul A, looks after the music, and has recently become secretary for the Companions of the Society. He has brought his hives with him, so we are expecting to be flowing with (milk and) honey this summer.

David has returned from Limon Abbey, France, and he is as chirpy as ever, cleaning and mopping, laying tables, serving the Lord in work and prayer. Gregory returned refreshed from his time at Furzey and collected David. At the time of writing he has just finished a week at Clifton College, Bristol, and has travelled today to Christchurch School, Brecon.

John has had his ups and downs since last writing, but he is preparing to go to Freeland with Ramon for the last fortnight of March, 'as assistant Chaplain' so he says. He is looking forward to the warmth of the Old Parsonage—he might want to stay!

Lawrence Christopher is at present the Chaplain at Freeland, and we are hoping to get washable floor covering in his laundry before he returns—with that and the fact that he can now get his laundry dry because of the LPG system he will feel the lightening of his load.

Alban has suffered bereavement in the death of his mother Gwendoline Addis. Lawrence C and Ramon attended the funeral which was simple but impressive. Before she died Mrs Addis gifted to Glasshampton library the whole set of *The Interpreters' Commentary on the Bible*,—a gift greatly appreciated.

Ramon keeps his nose to the grindstone, co-ordinating the life and doing some writing when he can. The recent ITV presentation he did on prayer and solitude in the 'Encounter' series was sensitively produced and edited, and the response continues to prove positive. The increasing illness and frailty of his father, being nursed by his mother has been the source of some anxiety and he is grateful for the grace given through the prayers of brothers and sisters.

The new group of novices from The Community of the Holy Name at Malvern shares Thursday afternoons with Glasshampton novices, with Sister Mary Alison CHN and Ramon.

Another generation of novices from The Community of the Holy Name, Malvern join with Glasshampton novices, and with Sister Mary Alison and Ramon in 'the doing of theology'. They are at present going through Gerard Hughes' *God of Surprises*, and Mungo joins in enthusiastically, wearing his dog-collar to the sessions. This is a productive exercise, the last part of the afternoon taking the form of a meditation.

We are just preparing for Brother Paul's profession here on Saturday 14 March,—it is good to continue such positive fellowship with the Birmingham House, and plans are afoot to initiate days of prayer at Glasshampton for the Birmingham brothers on a monthly basis.

Ministry among guests continues to be a joy in terms of counselling and prayer, and we dare to believe that Glasshampton ministers to brothers and guests at this primary level of prayer and love.

BELFAST Celtic Connections. Ulster folk might be surprised if you said you understood about The Troubles in Belfast! Phyllis has been here just eight months and Raymond Christian a year—and the position now would seem far less clear than when they first arrived from England. Of course the issues are different for those born in Ulster and those born elsewhere in the UK. The nearest Celtic links in the Friary may be traced through Judith whose Auntie Sadie lives ten miles away in Carrickfergus and Hubert's Grandparents who were natives of Cork.

These links matter more than you might at first think. After all, it is when a measure of assurance has been offered that people begin to feel safe enough to venture out into new situations, new social patterns, even new thoughts and attitudes. And so these links of origin speak volumes in upbuilding trust and understanding and in the dispelling of fear.

Slowly does it. Whatever our work in Northern Ireland, it is offered in Christ's name and with these objectives. Peter Timothy has just completed six years in the Parish of Holy Redeemer, Belfast and ten years in our Friary here. In thousands of small and personal ways he tried to share this sense of trust and understanding, and to dispel fear. All of us would be aware that the pace of progress is slow; but when the Franciscan **wee Minister** known to all in the Shankill Road as Brother Peter finally left at the end of last year, an endless procession of gifts and countless expressions of thanks from his protestant parishioners and beyond left us all embarrassed and Peter in tears. When 'Ulster says No' it is often simply a cry of bereavement.

The Key? Discovering so much love locked away in fear is the humbling and overwhelming experience of each brother or sister who comes to serve in Ulster. We inevitably find ourselves receiving far more than we are giving. While the First Order in Belfast remains

uncomfortably Anglo flavoured (though we trust it will not be for too long) it remains our privilege to be quietly and consistently involved in the process of unlocking locked-up love through the opportunities of service we have been assigned. Phyllis is giving more than a helping hand with the administration in a new movement in schools known as 'Integrated Education'. Judith works with families where one of its members is handicapped. Raymond Christian assists in Hospital Chaplaincy work and Brother Hubert is principally engaged in visiting the elderly. Roger Damian is enjoying the added delights of a Youth Club attached to a local parish and also relating to the Hospice situated close by—all very sobering for a deacon in training.

Thank you for your prayers for us and for Northern Ireland as a whole. The leaflet 'For the healing of our Nation' has just been updated and is available free on request (please enclose a stamp). More encouraging still for us would be if you placed an order for the small pack, *Promoting informed Prayer for Peace in Northern Ireland*, which is now available and an order form enclosed. Amid the surface tensions, the political deadlock and the personal tragedies that get reported like waves breaking on an incoming tide, we sense also an increase in the small pockets of understanding which tell of tangible hope. Such progress must be slow. We pray on, that the healing may be sustained and that the lamps of hope will become more visible for the rest of the world to see.

SAINT FRANCIS HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

The Ministry, life and work at S. Francis House continues to be a source of great joy, anxiety and much activity. We have a full complement of six residents at present and continuous referrals from the various homeless agencies of this city. Sadly, accommodation for the young person at risk is limited and not just a problem of the West Midlands.

Most of our residents are involved with YTS or Community Programme and for those without work there is plenty to help with in the day to day activities of the house. Hopefully we try to equip them with skills suitable to independent living. Alan is our welfare rights man and almost understands the DHSS, if that's possible!

We are very pleased to see the last of the builders depart the premises; however we are grateful for a new roof and kitchen and, of course, the grant from the housing corporation. How we ever lived through it all!

We have said goodbye to Peter Douglas and Marcus and said hello to William Henry and Paul and we mustn't forget Lizzie our puppy who keeps us well exercised.

Whilst the work of the house is our main ministry we do local engagements and continue a shared chaplaincy at Winson Green Prison which involves William Henry and Paul.

We were happy to host the profession of Sister Mary in our house chapel, it was a tight squeeze but a very worthwhile occasion.

We continue to give thanks to God for our life here as we serve Him in this special ministry and we ask your prayers for us and those in our care.

HILFIELD Deep mid-winter. Isolated Dorset in deep mid-winter was not without its excitements. In the bad January week, we had our share of burst pipes, and floods, and it was that week that we saw Vincent off to New Zealand and clothed the eight postulants as novices. Raymond Christian's life profession was also

due, but was postponed until the 21 February, when it took place with great joy and happiness: it was an additional happiness that Sister Pamela Joy also took her life vows on the same day, the Bishop of Hereford presiding at both. Then we had a series of minor thefts, which were a nuisance, and the icon of our Lady was stolen from the Chapel during a Sunday lunchtime. The police did very well to recover it. Especially we were glad because it turns out to be even more valuable than our insurance cover. We were also busy moving rooms. Simon Peter is now the Bursar and assistant Guardian and he and the general office have moved to what was the waiting room; Bernard has moved into what was the Bursar's office and Kenneth into what was the general office. We have all settled down, and, now that the telephones are established in their new settings, things are easier again.

Changes. Paschal has started the Open University basic course: John Francis and James went to the Ignatian spirituality week, and John also to a Myers Briggs weekend. Novice study has gone ahead here and at Compton and the novices have been joined by two postulants Richard Sandys-Winsch and Chris Hilman. Samuel is busy as novice Guardian and tells us that there will be some more postulants in the autumn. We are sad to say farewell to Stephen Francis, first to Stepney and then from the Society altogether: he has gone back to children's nursing, leaving us with very grateful memories. Barry is doing great things in the garden and, with a good band of helpers who are staying here, he is preparing for what looks to be a good year. We are grateful to Reg Howard for making it possible to have a small tractor and grass cutter, which should make the work easier.

Looking ahead. Already the groups for spring and summer are coming, and we expect in June a specially large number of people staying—members of the inter-provincial Chapters, who are meeting separately and together, bringing us up to 45 people staying, so that the novices will be under canvas. There are lots of other camps coming too, the dates of them were in the last Franciscan. We are looking forward to an interesting summer (our Festival is on July 11, 2pm-6pm) and then in the autumn there will be the Stigmata Festival (more details next time) at noon on 19 September. We shall as usual be glad to see friends who are visiting Dorset at any time and will send instructions of how to find us, if you let us know.

New life. We are having a busy lent, with courses in Dorchester (as part of the ecumenical mission which Martin is sharing in in the autumn) and at Sturminster Newton. Bernard is going to Belfast for a few days, and is heavily committed to working parties and groups in London. Altogether the Friary is far from standing still and we are grateful that new life is continually renewed.

SCUNTHORPE As in many houses of our community, the brothers come and go. But we have been able to maintain a normal optimum of four since May last year, and we are a family of five when Peter Douglas is with us during his vacations from Chichester Theological College where he is a student. When he is not with us his bedroom is often occupied by a visiting Friar.

When Christopher left us to go to Glasshampton, we were joined by Jonathan from Hilfield who is at present engaged in carrying out extensive research in order to produce a survey of the town centre parishes on the lines envisaged by the 'Faith in the City' report.

Cuthbert assists the Chaplain at Lincoln Prison for two days every week, and on one occasion he was joined by Peter Douglas who played his cornet at a service in the prison chapel. Martin combines the work of Provincial Secretary with some parish work at S.

Hugh's church. Anselm's work as Minister involves him with a good deal of time away from the House, but when he is at Scunthorpe he works with people at both ends of the age range, with infants in a nearby school and with elderly people in two local homes, in addition to which he looks after the garden.

David Burrows, an ordinand, came to stay for a few months and helped in S. George's parish; he has now moved on and is a student at Lincoln Theological College, but he still keeps in touch when he pays weekend visits to Scunthorpe.

The four resident brothers, together with three tertiaries from nearby, recently led a study day in Lincoln for the local non-stipendiary ministers, when the subject was Intercession. We are always grateful for opportunities of service within the diocese, where we have received much kindness from many people during the three and a half years that the community has lived in this place.

PLAISTOW The varied life of the house (united in prayers, meals, and crossword puzzles) continues happily. The remnant, mentioned in the last Chronicle, has effected now something of a Return, with a new member of the family who, if he bounces, bounces in exactly the way he should. Silas is enabling-to-happen (though he insists he is not running) such things as children's parties under the swimming pools next door and a street ministry to youngsters. He disappears sometimes to his old haunts in more exotic parts of the West End to share in soup runs.

Angelo is back from a very worthwhile time in America. Besides hoping to get involved in one-to-one counselling of people with AIDS, he is involved in the much more immediate task of sharing his experience with those who are beginning AIDS counselling projects in Hereford, Edinburgh, Chichester, and elsewhere.

Sister Beatrice will have made (we hope!) her life profession on April 4, at S. Philip's Church. Beatrice has lived in this family since she was a novice, but horror stories about the big wide world of the religious life have failed to impress her.

Edmund has returned to the fold and has been happily hunting down missing friends and screwdrivers.

This house does seem to be a particular place of healing. For each other, who provide this particular wild and balmy, subtle and transparent, abrasive and calming environment, we give our thanks to God.

THE COMMUNITY OF S. FRANCIS, NEW ZEALAND

Sister Teresa writes:

Since we arrived here in November we have been made to feel welcome by a great variety of people. The Anglican Church in New Zealand is small enough for the dioceses to be aware of happenings up and down the country so we have been welcomed into the Province and not simply into one diocese as might have been the case elsewhere. This is no doubt partly due to the wide-spread and highly-valued ministry of the brothers.

The fact of having a temporary home in the inner-city area of Auckland has enabled us to look more closely at what our ministry might be and have a time for experimentation. We have now chosen to reside in the inner-city fringe and accepted the use of a house owned by S. Paul's Church which can be adapted to suit our particular needs as a Community and which we rent from the parish.

Each one of us has become involved in some flexible part-time ministry outside the house though this might have to be reviewed in the future. Noël is doing counselling one day a week at Friendship House which is an ecumenical community centre in South Auckland, and exploring the possibility of pastoral work on another day for a Community Church with a ministry specifically for Gay people which is linked with S. Matthew's; Maureen is working part-time as a staff nurse in a geriatric rehabilitation unit in Auckland General Hospital; Dianne is beginning part-time industrial chaplaincy work here in the city; Susan is a volunteer in the Children's Hospital and has been involved in setting up a toy library, and I am doing part-time pastoral work in S. Paul's parish. Apart from this we have taken part in parish pastoral visitations (missions) and sundry youth camps with the brothers; not to mention preachings, quiet days, Mothers' Unions engagements and parish barbecues. Several of us have undertaken Maori studies at the local technical college which includes both language and culture. We are also careful to grow together as a group in every way we can, not least by exploring the locality together including the beaches, and generally enjoying one another's company.

THE COMMUNITY OF S. FRANCIS, SAN FRANCISCO

Our travel agent is kept busy trying to find bargain rates for the various trips that we undertake. As Third Order visitor I attended a very good convocation in Trinidad in February. The growth of the Third Order in that country (including Tobago) has been steady and strong and there are many Associates (Companions) also.

Jean, Pamela Clare and I very much look forward to going to England for the various meetings in June and I shall take this opportunity to visit all our C.S.F. houses in England and N. Ireland. This will be my first tour as Minister and it will be good to see sisters whom I haven't met for some years. Later in the year I hope to go to New Zealand.

This is an interesting time in the life of C.S.F. as we are presented with new theological concepts expressed in inclusive language, controversial

church issues, especially the ordination of women and the challenges inherent in the prevailing sociological climate. Sometimes it all seems very remote from the 'little, poor man of Assisi' and we are tempted to dream of 'simplifying' and 'getting back to basics'. May we, like Francis, be hearers and bearers of the Gospel in our day.

Loving greetings,

Cecilia C.S.F.

Brother Robert Hugh writes:

Brother Rodney has been elected Minister Provincial of the American Province, and will assume that office at our annual Provincial Chapter at the end of May, when my six year term as Minister Provincial comes to an end. Do please uphold Rodney in your prayers.

Brother Rodney grew up in Melbourne, Australia, and joined the Friars in 1964. He began his novitiate in Papua New Guinea, since the Friars were not yet established in Australia. He served as Guardian of the Brisbane Friary, and was the master-mind behind the innovative SPAN newspaper of the Pacific Province.

He came to the American Province in 1981, and has developed several ministries in Manhattan, New York, where he is a staff member of the Center for Spirituality at the General Theological Seminary, a chemical dependency counselor at the Freedom Institute, and spiritual director to many, including members of other Religious Orders. For the past few years he has edited our new-look 'Little Chronicle' newspaper in the American Province, based on the SPAN format.

Brother Rodney, together with Brother Dominic and Brother Jason-Robert will represent the American Province at the worldwide meetings of SSF at Hilfield in June.

I feel increasingly emancipated in anticipation of handing over my responsibilities, and look forward to the prospect of a sabbatical in the last quarter of 1987. I expect to accept a generous invitation from the Society of S. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Massachusetts to be their guest. It will be good to spend several months in one place instead of living out of a suitcase, and to live in the context of an Anglican Community without having to get entangled in day-to-day administration. I plan to do some good things for myself and my own spiritual journey that will provide me with more input than output, which will be a refreshing change.

PACIFIC ISLANDS PROVINCE—SOLOMON ISLANDS REGION

Brother Giles writes:

Every evening during supper at Alangaula we listen to 'service messages' on the national radio. Because of the difficulties of posts and telephones in a country made up of hundreds of islands, large and small, this radio programme acts as a sort of telegram service as well as 'personal column'. Anyone can pay for a message to be sent out, and we use this service ourselves. For example, when the election of our Minister took place the votes had to be counted in Honiara, where the Archbishop (our Protector) lives, but the result was sent to me (Provincial Secretary) on the radio. Otherwise it may have taken anything up to a week to get the result to me. Of course everyone else hears the messages as well, so it also

becomes a sort of gossip column. Any evening there may be messages warning a village that an anti-malaria spray team is coming, to a clinic telling the nurse to give a specific treatment to a patient, to some man who has failed to return to his work after his holiday with a threat of dismissal, the itinerary of some government officer, or, as this week, of the Archbishop as he tours one of the island groups in his diocese. In a country with a small population, about 300,000, such as ours this programme is of great interest to us all and often a brother will say 'That's my sister', or 'That's my school mate', as they hear a message. The Solomon Islands Broadcasting Company calls itself 'Radio Happy Isles', and this is, generally speaking, a good description of these islands, but at the moment there is a great sadness in the islands. As we listen to the service messages there is one 'tok sori' after another as messages of condolence are sent out by various people to their relations telling them about some relative who is missing, and must now be presumed dead, after a ship sank last week. The ship was the landing craft *Vula* and she capsized last Thursday night. There were 49 passengers and crew on board and so far, a week later, only 23 have been found. The ship was under contract to a logging company and they were moving bulldozers and other equipment to a new logging camp. Accompanying the equipment were the men who were to operate it together with their families. Some whole families have been lost as well as many women and children. There are two mysteries surrounding the incident, one is why did the ship capsize (it seems to have been badly loaded), and secondly why did the ship monitoring service fail to report that the ship was not reporting its position, something they are obliged to do twice a day? The ship sank on a Thursday evening and no one knew about it until two men survivors managed to swim to an island on the Monday morning. They and the other survivors had managed to get into life-rafts.

Why should such an accident be so traumatic for us all? The reason is that we all depend utterly on ships and their reliability. The whole life of this country depends, economically and socially, on sea transport. This landing craft was bigger than most of the ships people use and its loss brings home the vulnerability of us all. Every year there are a number of deaths due to people being lost at sea, but that is usually in the small dinghies and power boats people use around the islands; for one of the main cargo and passenger ships to sink has given us all a nasty shock. I've lost count of the number of journeys I've done on ships between Alangaula and Honiara, or Honiara and other places. And every time a brother moves from one house to another or goes on holiday, it will be by ship. Every time you pray for those who travel by land, sea or air, please remember those of us who depend on ships for basic transport and who face the particular perils of the sea. This particular tragedy has been sad for us as two close relations of one of our aspirants here were on the ship and must be presumed dead.

The Church of Melanesia operates two ships at the present time and we often travel on them. I was able to get to Honiara just after Christmas on the smaller of the two, the *Charles Fox*, which happened to be here at that time. It came to pick me up two days earlier than I expected, which was unusual, usually it comes days late. And then when I was in Honiara I discovered that I would have to return at least a week earlier than I had planned because the other church ship, the *Southern Cross*, which was coming to Alangaula, was going to some other places on the way. In fact it was not a bad thing as there was very little to do in Honiara over New Year, so many people being away on holiday, and also Patteson House was full up with men waiting to come here to be postulants or aspirants. So seven of us sailed for Alangaula, not the direct route which takes about eighteen hours, but via Sikaiana, otherwise known as the Stewart Islands. It was a detour of about three hundred miles, and with the time we spent at Sikaiana, took us

from the Monday evening until the Friday midday. Our experiences at Sikaiana are another story as there is no landing for ships and one has to get onto the reef either by swimming or going in a dugout canoe. I chose the latter method, but that itself is hair-raising as the ocean swells pick the canoe up and throw it at the reef where it is literally caught by people standing there. Having seen babies in arms and a paralysed man already go ashore by this manner I felt able to trust the skill and resourcefulness of the islanders. After that experience we were all glad to get safely back to Alangaula and to settle in to our novice training programme for this year. At present there are sixteen of us here, myself, six novices, four postulants and five aspirants. We have a good and happy life together and it is good to see the growth and development in the young men as the weeks go by.

Elsewhere in our Solomon Islands Region there is growth and development too. Brother Zeph Idiniah has now returned from New Zealand and is the Guardian at Patteson House, replacing Brother Geoffrey Leonard who has moved to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. Brother Francis has also transferred from Patteson House and is now at Stroud in Australia. Brother Charles will be moving from Alangaula to Patteson House in March and Brother Jack Austen will be coming here. Brother Boniface Lee will be moving from here to Auki to be with the brothers there and to help them with their increasing number of visits to Districts on Malaita for missions and courses. We hope that he and Brother Moses Lonsdale will be professed at the end of March, after we have had our Regional Chapter at Auki. One item on the agenda of that meeting will be the proposed move of our novice training from here to somewhere on Guadalcanal island that will be more accessible. We have been planning to do this for more than three years and we hope this year will be the year it actually happens. Then we will only have to cope with the hazards of the local roads rather than those of the sea!

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND PROVINCE

Brother Daniel writes:

Here in New Zealand we ended 1986 and began 1987 with professions. December 6 saw Damian Kenneth make his Life Profession before Bishop Bruce Gilberd, Bishop of Auckland. Then February 7 saw James-Francis make his profession in simple vows. Both these events took place in S. Paul's Church Symonds St. where a number of the brothers worship each Sunday. Both were very joyful and happy events and a large group of our friends and members of the Franciscan Family in Auckland attended. One of the joys of our life in Auckland is our links with the O.F.M. and O.F.M. Caps. and the sisters F.M.D.M. It was also a joy to have our own sisters with us, newly settled in Auckland, even if the house they live in is soon to be demolished, but they have a new house to go to at 33, Carlton-Gore Road, which is quite near to the Auckland Hospital.

Now some news about Brothers—Francis has arrived at Stroud and seems to have settled very happily into the life there, he will be a great support to both Brian and the Clares. Another arrival from the Pacific Islands Province is Brother Lancelot who is spending two years in Auckland studying English as a second language and Biblical Studies at Chanel Institute. Lancelot is from Papua New Guinea and replaces Brothers Grayson and Zeph who have both returned to their province. They both added much to our life, and we thank them and the Pacific Islands Province; over the last six years a number of brothers have come to study with us in Auckland, both from our own community and from the Melanesian Brotherhood. Brothers Barnabas and Alphaeus of the Melanesian Brotherhood are to return to the Solomons this month for their Great

Conference, and Brother Leo-Anthony will be going with them to speak at the Great Conference, and to have some discussions with the Brotherhood. Another happy link for which we thank God.

Still in Auckland, Vincent has arrived from U.K. from cold and snow to the warmth of a New Zealand summer, and in no time at all in his quiet humble way has won the hearts of many, so much so that someone said the other day, 'Oh you mean our social brother'. Already Vincent has made many friends and helped on our Mission Team—even if at times Vincent remembers more about Daniel's days as a novice than Daniel likes!

Milton has returned from a time on leave and is now back at Brookfield and seems to have gained from his time with the Benedictines.

This year Howard has continued his studies at S. Francis College Brisbane, but has asked if he could have a time away from the Community while he studies, so Howard is on Leave of Absence until the end of the year.

The stop press news from this part of the world is to ask for your prayers for Brian Hamilton and family and for his parish, Brian's parish is Kawerau and Edgumbe the two places worst hit in the recent Earthquakes in New Zealand, lots of damage has taken place and many people are suffering from shock. Brian is Guardian of the Third Order in New Zealand.

The Friary at Brookfield these days is a little uncertain, only five brothers and Sister Peta of the Community of the Visitation. It is the general belief that our time at Brookfield has come to an end and we are looking for another house, more in the city and much smaller. In the meantime the brothers have been very active taking part in the Youth Synod of the Australian Church, and hosting the Ordination retreats. It will be hard to move from Brookfield but necessary if we are to be a community in Australia. Our first move will be into temporary accommodation in the Brisbane area, then we need to grow together as a community—after that coming together Ministry will be worked out. Auckland is as busy as ever with Pastoral Visitations and the whole of January taken up with youth adventure camps. Summer was so hot this year that one camp, in a forest had to be cancelled due to fire risk. Not long after the camp Kings School held their Standard 5 camp, Leo and James-Francis went to this camp, the camp was a success, but James managed to fall over a stile and do his leg in, so he is now in plaster.

Well that's my first letter to *The Franciscan*. In my first month I've managed to fly to Melbourne for the Religious Life Advisory Council and then straight up to Brisbane for the Third Order Chapter, then back to Auckland to help in a Pastoral Visit. I hope it's not too much of a foretaste.

To praise humility is to cause it to be desired from a secret self-love and to invite people to enter its domain through the wrong door.

JEAN-PIERRE CAMUS (1584—1652)

A Letter to Companions

S. Mary at the Cross
Glasshampton
Shrawley
Worcester
WR6 6TQ

Dear Companions of the SSF,

Last January, with the Provincial Chapter's agreement, Brother Anselm asked me to succeed Brother Keith as Secretary of the Companions. I was happy to take it on, but after I had said yes the thought came to me, 'What have I said yes to?' I wasn't too sure then and I'm still not sure now! What I do know is that because of my work with the magazine I already know many of you and that you know me, either because we have written to each other or have met in one or other of the five SSF houses I've lived in since joining the Society nearly fourteen years ago. When your name and address comes before me on the list (usually because I'm about to send you a subscription reminder!) very often I can picture a face as well. Others of you whom I haven't yet met will be well known to other sisters and brothers and will maintain your link with the Society through your contact with them.

I hope you will see the point about knowing and being known. There is an old (corny) joke which goes something like this. What are the three things which the Holy Ghost doesn't know? Answer: What the Jesuits are getting up to. What the Dominicans are thinking. How many orders for women are there in the church? Perhaps a fourth could be added: How many Companions are there in SSF? Many of you who read this will be Companions of long standing and will have seen some changes in the ways in which the Companions relate to the rest of the Society. Perhaps others of you have let your links with us slacken off a bit. There are even some Companions who won't know that I'm writing this to them because they no longer receive the magazine as subscribers.

Does any of the above raise a question or two in your mind? Two questions occur to me, neither of which I can answer by myself so I hope that some of you can help me. The first is: What does being a Companion of the SSF mean for me today and how can I make it meaningful in my life? The second: Do we know each other sufficiently well enough to feel that we are all part of the wider Franciscan 'family'? As the Secretary, I feel that I have some responsibility towards helping Companions feel that they belong both to each other and to the Society, and I hope to do whatever I can to that end. If any of you would like to share your thoughts on this then I should be only too pleased to hear from you. At the moment I cannot promise to visit the various groups of you all over the country, but I can and will, answer letters. I should like to appeal to all the local Secretaries of groups to please get in touch with me soon so that I can get to know you as well as pass on some information which may be of use.

Towards the back of the magazine you will find a list of events to which you are invited, all being held in various houses. I'd like to feel that your link with us will start with the sisters and/or brothers in the house nearest you, and I hope you will feel that this makes sense. For those of you (and I do realise that this may be a larger group than I'm aware of) who don't live near one of our houses or who can no longer travel easily, where do you fit in? In a way this could be said to be the most important part of the duties of a Companion

so it is as well that it should come at the end. There are some of you who use the Intercession papers every day and so unite yourself with the rest of SSF in prayers for its daily life and ministry. In this way you are a real source of support to us all. You will see too, that on the thirtieth day of every month you are remembered by those for whom you pray. In our life of prayer may we all come to know and be known by our Lord Jesus Christ who called S. Francis to follow him and who calls each one of us in the same way.

Yours sincerely in the fellowship of SSF,

Christopher SSF.

Franciscan Aid

Although it has sometimes been said that Franciscan Aid is entirely a Third Order concern nothing could be further from the truth. Franciscan Aid is a lusty four year old infant and depends for its existence not only on all three Orders of the Society but on the Companions too.

The Trustees, of whom the Minister General is the chairman, meet every six months to assess the needs presented to them and to decide how best to use the funds available. Until their meeting in December last they had been in the happy position of being able to respond to every reasonable demand made on the Fund but on that occasion they had to make the sad decision that one otherwise perfectly acceptable request must be refused simply through lack of money.

The contribution of First Order Brothers and Sisters and especially those working in the Third World is invaluable, indeed it is essential. It is through them and their contacts that the Trustees learn of the specific needs of those whom we are able to help and it is often through them also that we can channel our grants so that they are used to the best advantage. For example, we are currently helping a promising young man in Trinidad to complete a course in electrical engineering but we would never have known how much our help was needed unless we had first been alerted by the First Order brother on the spot. Similarly we have helped several young people in Tanzania get established and have been greatly assisted by the First Order brothers at Dar es Salaam.

Most of the money passing through the fund comes from members of the Third Order in the European, American, and Australia and New Zealand provinces but a significant number of companions find it a convenient channel for their offerings. Above all we know that we are supported by the love and prayers of members of all three orders and of the companions. As treasurer I am constantly encouraged by the supportive messages contained in the letters I receive both from donors and recipients.

From time to time a leaflet setting out something of the fund's aims and achievements is sent to members of the Third Order and one such was published last January. I have a quantity of spare copies and I should be delighted to send one to anyone interested enough to write to me at 106, Lion Road, Bexleyheath, Kent. DA6 8PQ.

David Datson.

A Sonnet:

to Christ, in S. Benet's Cambridge,
before Holy Communion

Dive, white Christ, to black death awaiting—
Taut in straining curve of diver's form You poise,
Pausing for death upon that edge of time, making—
In ev'ry line, in ev'ry limb convulsed—the arc of grace.

Soar, white Christ, spring from black rack constraining,
Fly with dancer's lightness, bright from the edge of love.
Pierce to the pivot-point with fierce, fleet lightning,
Swift to illuminate from there the circling dove.

And wing me too as I kneel here,
Seeing your graceful anguish on the wall,
As I before a little light kneel here
And wait to taste again Your soaring fall.

Christ, diving, plunge to me through pain's dark deepenings,
Flying upon my tongue, Christ, strike with lightnings.

SIMON BAILEY.

Liberation Theology and the Holy Spirit

BY BROTHER TERRY S.S.F.



WHERE the Spirit is, there is change. Things are not going to be left as they are once the inspiring, emboldening, prompting aspect of God's activity is felt on them.

This is as true of theology as it is of any other aspect of God's world. And if we were looking for evidence of the Spirit's handiwork in theology, it would be natural to turn to liberation theology, one of the emerging influences in theological debate over the last fifteen years. This is change indeed. From nowhere (as it were) a whole new theological approach has emerged and made itself felt.

Indeed, the very rise of liberation theology may be among the intimations of the Holy Spirit at work. Why? To begin with, we may note that liberation theology put down its first roots in unpromising ground. In the 1960s Latin American Catholicism was in general in a situation of stultifying decay. A deadening clericalism inhibited any change at grass roots level, while at the top the prelates of the church were compromised by their willingness to give respectability to the juntas and dictators that ran the various countries.

Yet when the Latin American bishops met at Medellin in 1968 they startled themselves by calling for 'a comprehensive, bold, urgent and radical change and renewal of the Church'. As part of this they pledged that the church would in future give priority to the needs of the poor. Of course this development did not take place out of the blue. On the one hand new forms of Christian life were already starting to emerge in the shanty towns of the continent. On the other hand the bishops were encouraged by the Vatican Council (which itself was set in motion by an octogenarian caretaker pope—another sign of the Spirit at work!) But ordinarily we would not have expected such a radical shift, and there are good grounds for seeing God at work here.

It is also worth noting that the influence of liberation theology in Europe has grown despite the relative indifference of the custodians of theology, namely those who draw up syllabuses of theology in universities, colleges and seminaries. I completed a theology degree in 1982. In our doctrine classes we laboured over what people thought of Christ in Alexandria and Antioch in the third century. What people

thought of Christ in Latin America today did not so much as flash across our horizon.

It is sometimes said that liberation theology is too recent to be studied, and may turn out to be a flash in the pan. Perhaps. But it is interesting to compare this assertion with the fact that the dense, sometimes almost unreadable books of Karl Rahner were prescribed reading on syllabuses well before his death. Moreover, a visit to any theological bookseller will reveal books on shelves and tables dealing with many aspects of liberation theology. That which has scarcely appeared in academic circles has a large following. It seems to meet a need, a hunger almost, for theological reflection which takes seriously people's everyday lives.

There are, however, more substantial grounds for saying that the Spirit might be at work in this untidily burgeoning movement of liberation theology. I would point to three changes in particular. First, liberation theology has changed the place where theology is done. Second, it has altered our perceptions as to who does theology. And third, it has altered our expectations of how theology relates to the society of which it is part.

I

It has altered the place where theology is done in the sense of creating a new geography. Until very recently one notable feature of theology was its domination by the northern hemisphere, and by Western Europe and North America in particular. This was where the university faculties were, the fellowships, research scholarships and endowments, the libraries and source documents. Learned journals and books flowed from this region in a confident, never-ending stream. Theologians operating out of this culture thought that they spoke for the world—or at least, thought that their conclusions applied equally everywhere. It seemed likely to go on like this for ever.

We can only appreciate the impact of liberation theology if we realize how powerful the forces were which operated against any kind of shift in the geographical focus of theology. Without the Spirit's insistence, would the voice of the southern hemisphere ever have made itself heard? Would it ever have been taken seriously? Of course, the stream of theological discourse continues unabated from the north. But a question mark has been placed against the claims it makes for itself, and it has had to share the platform with this new arrival.

The influence of liberation theology has made people more likely to be aware of how a theologian's agenda and conclusions can be crucially influenced by the culture to which she or he belongs. Indeed, the less a theologian is aware of being influenced in this way, the more likely it is that his or her work will reflect the surrounding culture. In this respect even the most modern theology (Cupitt, Küng, Pohier) is different from liberation theology. This is pointed out by Gustavo Gutierrez, who says that 'Modern theology tries to answer the challenge of the non-believer; by contrast, liberation theology listens to the challenging question of the non-person'. A crucial aspect of the geographic shift in doing theology is an accompanying shift in priorities and subject matter. I shall return to this in section three when I look at the relationship of theology to society.

II

Liberation theology has broadened our perceptions as to who does theology. Theology has tended to be the preserve of a well-educated group of scholars, who have put their services at the disposal of the community. To acquire theological skills has been seen as requiring discipline, commitment, and a long apprenticeship.

Through liberation theology this has changed, and a new mode has arrived in which theology is not studied but done. People from every background come together, particularly in small neighbourhood-based groups called base communities, to reflect on the word of God and its application to their lives. In part this is a theology of story: biblical narrative is linked to the story of a person or a group. It is not a question of asking, 'What does this text *mean*?' but rather a case of asking, implicitly, 'What does it mean to be the people defined by these stories?'

Theo Witvliet puts it thus: 'The illiterate farm-workers and labourers bring with them their experiences of helplessness, suffering, of a world full of conflict and opposition between rich and poor, when they enter the world of biblical stories. The surprising discovery they make is that the reality of the biblical stories is in fact their reality'. Theology is done this way in Latin America, the Philippines, Korea and South Africa. Writing of this phenomenon in Brazil, Alvaro Barreiro says that 'The gospel is not something that comes from outside, culturally. It is a seed which sprouts from the ground of their suffering and oppressed lives and which breaks the hardness of that ground precisely because it is rooted therein. The evangelizers are not more protected socially, economically, or politically than the other members of the community. They suffer the same oppression, the same persecution, the same torture as well'.

Is this development a consequence of the Spirit? If so, perhaps it is not so much because it is something new as because it is something old. The Spirit is as much at work in recalling us to essentials as it is to be found in leading us to new and uncharted territory. In this instance, it seems that the Spirit is reminding us that the church was the People of God long before it was a hierarchy. The movement for and by the poor to do theology in their own communities is a return to that important understanding of the church, in which all are equal and all participate. In Christianity great truths are not the preserves of well-researched scholars but are equally accessible to all who can bring together the gospel and the raw material of their own lives.

III

Liberation theology has also altered our perceptions of how theology relates to the society around it. To do liberation theology is to enter into a commitment to change the circumstances of the poorest, most exploited and most vulnerable members of society. For those who are in the category of being the poor, this means seeking, through faith in Jesus' message, to reshape the circumstances of their lives as far as possible. For those who are not in this category, it means using their resources to work for change according to the priorities of the poor. Thus Gustavo Gutierrez says that liberation theology 'is a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed'.

This is related to that shift in agenda which I mentioned earlier in connection with a shift in geographical focus. Many Third World theologians feel that traditional theology's preoccupation with rational and allegedly universal truths disguises a cultural domination. By proposing truths which are valid for all contexts, it prevents experiences of faith being taken up from outside its own context, and thus, as Witvliet puts it, 'comes close to marginalizing and despising the experiences of others'.

Liberation theology is strongly opposed to this process, which it sees as a dualism dividing faith and action. Instead liberation theology is consciously located in the everyday lives of people, with their experiences of bad housing, hard work or no work at all, vulnerability to the caprices of the capitalist system, and lack of social standing. The poor, though, have other experiences, in which liberation theology also seeks to be located: experiences of communal solidarity, of God at work here and now, of faith in God's promise of a better future, a future that with his help people can bring into the present. There is thus a strong

expectation that the sharing of faith will lead to change in the circumstances which bring humiliation and hardship.

It is here that the differences between liberation theology and traditional theology are at their strongest. In the northern hemisphere, faith is internalized. It is expected that faith may alter one's outlook in some general way, but changes will be expected only in some personal habits, in the acquisition of virtue, and in the sense of acquiring a source of strength in times of trial. But there is no expectation that a person's entry into living faith will literally change the landscape around him or her.

Of course, it would be unfair to attribute this lack of expectation of change to a particular mode of theological reflection. The fact is that most northern hemisphere societies are a good deal less malleable than southern ones. Despite our wealth, we feel unable to influence in any observable way the shape and functioning of our world. Liberation theology calls us back to faith, to the belief that we can make a difference. This call from fatalism to hope, from passivity to action, is likely to be a work of the Spirit, rejuvenating and challenging the jaded churches of the northern hemisphere.

It is perhaps this commitment to people's everyday experiences and hopes of change which has raised the most doubts among European and North American critics of liberation theology. This is particularly the case where liberation theologians have used Marxist analyses to try and identify the pressure points for social change. Critics feel that the commitment to the poor is somehow onesided, that dangerous judgements are made and that theology demands detachment.

On the other hand, liberation theology's preoccupation with people's pressing needs and desperate circumstances might just be evidence of the work of the Spirit, disturbing the placid waters of the northern churches with the cold wind of realism. Gustavo Gutierrez tells the story of someone, rather opposed to liberation and uninterested in poverty, who complained about a document drawn up by the Latin American bishops: 'Wearisome', he said, 'it's irritating. All you find there is the poor, the poor, the poor'. To which someone else replied, 'Yes, indeed. And the worst of it is, that's all you find in the streets also'.

To mourn for national guilt, in which all share, is a duty incumbent on all, but especially on priests.

BISHOP THOMAS KEN (1637—1711)

Spirit, Church, Eucharist

BY BISHOP KALLISTOS OF DIOKLEIA



A Continuing Pentecost

In both the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed, following the section on the Holy Spirit there comes at once a clause referring to the Catholic Church. This is much more than a matter of editorial convenience or a chance juxtaposition. Between the Holy Spirit and the Church there is a direct and obvious connection: the Church is a continuing Pentecost, the immediate consequence of the descent of the fiery tongues in the upper room. 'Where the Church is, there is the Spirit', says S. Irenaeus of Lyons, 'and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace'.¹ To emphasize this relationship, in the Orthodox tradition the feast of All Saints is kept on the first Sunday after Pentecost; having celebrated the descent of the Holy Spirit, we proceed at once to celebrate the effects of that descent in the life of the Church.

If, then, we wish to understand the true character of the Church, we cannot do better than start from the account of Pentecost in Acts 2. This tells us three things in particular about the Spirit and the Church.

A universal gift

First, the gift of the Spirit in the Church is a *universal* gift, bestowed upon everyone: 'they were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:4). In his explanation of what has just happened, S. Peter applies to the event of Pentecost the prophecy of Joel: 'It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh' (Acts 2:17: cf. Joel 2:28). Under the Old Covenant the Spirit was conferred only on exceptional leaders of the community, but now he is given to everyone. In the life of the Church the gift or *charisma* of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to the hierarchy or to the ordained ministry, but is poured out upon the people of God in its totality. All are Spirit-bearers, 'pneumatics'; all are, in the proper sense of the word, 'charismatics', endowed with gifts of grace. 'You have an anointing (*chrisma*) from the Holy One, and you *all* have knowledge' (1 John 2:20).

Reading this last text an Orthodox Christian thinks at once of the second sacrament that he or she has received, immediately after Baptism, the sacrament of Chrismation (corresponding to the Western

Confirmation). Following the baptismal immersion, the priest takes the Holy Chrism (*myron*) and anoints the newly-baptized with the Sign of the Cross on forehead, eyes, nostrils, lips, ears, breast, hands and feet, saying each time as he does so, 'The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit'. This post-baptismal anointing is for each of us a personal Pentecost: the tongues of fire, which descended visibly upon the apostolic community on the first Whitsunday, descend upon the newly-baptized at Chrismation invisibly but with no less reality and power. Every one of us is from the moment of Baptism and Chrismation a 'charismatic' Spirit-bearer. We are *all* filled with the Holy Spirit. In the words of S. Symeon of Thessalonica (d. 1429):

Not only bishops, priests, prophets and kings have received the divine Chrism, but equally all those who have been baptized in Christ have become the anointed of the Lord. That is why the faithful have, by reason of this Chrismation—provided that they keep themselves in holiness—the power to prophesy, to perform works of healing, and to abound in a multitude of other *charismata* of the Spirit.²

Significantly, at Pentecost it was not only the Apostles who were present but the entire Christian community, women as well as men. In Acts 1:14, after a mention of the Apostles, it is said, 'All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus . . .' Presumably, then, Mary and the women were also present with the Apostles in the upper room at Pentecost; so far as the descent of the Spirit is concerned, 'there is neither male nor female, for you are all one . . .' (Gal. 3:28). It is to be regretted that in most Orthodox icons of Pentecost the Mother of God does not in fact appear, although she has a central place in icons of the Ascension.

Gift of diversity

The gift of the Spirit in the Church is in the second place a gift of *diversity*. At Pentecost the tongues of fire are 'cloven' or 'divided' (Acts 2:3), and they rest directly and individually upon each one present. So it is also in the Church. The Paraclete makes us each different; he makes me to be distinctively myself in my specific uniqueness. The Spirit is not merely a quality or power of the Godhead, an insentient force—not merely a 'sacred blast', as once I heard him described—but he is the third *person* of the Trinity; and as person he reaffirms each of us in our own characteristic and differentiated personhood. Hard though it is for us to

envisage the Spirit in personal terms—for he does not show us his own face, but points always to the risen Christ (John 16:13-14)—within the Church we can and do nonetheless enter into an ‘I-and-thou’ relationship with him. And within this ‘I-and-thou’ relationship there is an inexhaustible variety.

At Pentecost the Apostles do not use Esperanto or some other universal language, but each of the many nationalities represented in the crowd hears them speak ‘in our own tongue wherein we were born’ (Acts 2:8). The multiplicity of languages and dialects is not abolished at Pentecost, but it ceases to be a cause for division, for through the power of the Spirit there is mutual comprehension. So far from suppressing our ethnic and personal diversity, the Pentecostal Spirit within the Church seals it with his blessing. As the Spirit of freedom, in his liberating power he delivers us from stereotypes, from meaningless repetition, from all totalitarian collectivism. Life in the Spirit makes all things to be fresh, varied and original; it is wrong-doing, not sanctity, that is monotonous and boring. I remember how Father Algy Robertson used to say wearily, after long hours spent in hearing confessions, ‘What a pity there are no new sins!’ But there are always new forms of holiness.

Gift of unity

Thirdly, the gift of the Spirit in the Church is a gift of *unity*. ‘There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit’ (1 Cor. 12:4), whose specific function it is to unite us in ‘the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:3). The New Testament uses in particular the term ‘fellowship’ or ‘communion’ (*koinonia*) when speaking of the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit within the Church to create fellowship by mutual sharing, to establish communion or communication. This is clearly underlined in the narrative of Acts 2. At the moment of the Spirit’s descent, all are gathered ‘together’ (*homou*) ‘in one place’ (*epi to auto*); some early manuscripts say not just ‘together’ but ‘with one accord’ (*homothymadon*) (Acts 2:1). Far more is here implied than spatial contiguity in a single room. All are ‘together’ in the sense of inner concord, of spiritual unanimity. The gift of the Spirit causes the many to be one Body in Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). While making us different, the Spirit also makes us one; for true personal liberty is not arbitrary self-will but relatedness to others. As the Spirit of freedom, the Paraclete liberates us from the tyranny not only of collectivism but also of isolation.

In this way, to use the symbolism of the Orthodox *Kontakion* or 'office hymn' for the feast of Pentecost, the Spirit reverses the effect of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:7):

Once, when the Most High came down and confused the
tongues,
He divided the nations.
But now, distributing the tongues of fire,
He has called all to unity.
Therefore with one voice
We glorify the all-holy Spirit.

'Calling all to unity', the Spirit enables a multitude of human beings in the Church to speak 'with one voice'. The chief characteristic of the 'Pentecostal' Church at Jerusalem was precisely that its members 'had all things in common' and were 'united in heart and soul' (Acts 2:44; 4:32). And such continues to be in every generation the mark of the Church, when true to itself.

We Orthodox like to speak of ourselves as 'the Church of the Councils'; for it is particularly at a synod or church council that this Pentecostal miracle whereby the many speak 'with one voice' is visibly renewed in history. The aim of a church council is not simply to reach decisions by a bare majority vote (or even by a majority of two-thirds!), for such majority decisions risk violating the conscience of the minority. The goal of a synod is higher and harder: under the Spirit's guidance, through prayer and an open exchange of views, to attain moral unanimity, a true consensus, a 'common mind'. And this common conciliar mind is to be not merely *ours* but *the Spirit's*. For, at a true church council after the model of Pentecost, the total is greater than the sum of the parts. *Together* we become *something more* than we are as scattered individuals, and this 'something more' is the presence of the Spirit in our midst.

Such is the gift of the Spirit in the Church: a universal gift, a gift of diversity, a gift of unity. If, then, we are asked to single out one total and all-inclusive 'fruit of the Spirit' within the Christian community, we may perhaps speak above all of this universal gift of *diversity-in-unity*. In any social group we are constantly confronted by the difficulty of holding in balance two contrasting values: authority and liberty, obedience and freedom, the needs of the greater whole and the proper expression of each part. In the Church, and in the Church alone, can a true reconciliation of these values be found. On the human, historical level

we Christians are continually failing to effect a reconciling balance. But our vocation in the Holy Spirit commits us to nothing less than this.

Spirit and Eucharist

Now that we have explored a little the bond between the Spirit and the Church, it is time to take a further step. The Church is not only the temple and Kingdom of the Holy Spirit, but also and to an equal degree the Body of Christ. If the Church is by its very essence Pentecostal, then it is at the same time essentially Eucharistic.³ It is the Holy Spirit that creates the Church and holds it in unity; but the Church is also created and held in unity by the Eucharist. The foundation of the Church, its earthly birthday, falls both on Maundy Thursday and on Whitsunday. (The Early Fathers also thought of the Church as an eternal reality, not just beginning at the Last Supper or at Pentecost, but pre-existent from before all ages in the heavenly places. The second-century writer Hermas, for example, records a vision in which he saw the Church as an aged woman, and was told: 'She was created before everything else . . . and because of her the world was formed'.⁴)

The Pentecostal and Eucharistic aspects of the Church, so far from being mutually exclusive, are in fact integrally connected, for the Eucharist itself is a Pentecostal event. S. Irenaeus speaks of the Son and the Spirit as the 'two hands' of the Father,⁵ and God is always using both his hands at once. This is true of the Eucharist, as it is of all other aspects of the divine economy. When thinking of Eucharistic consecration and communion, we need to avoid the danger of lapsing into 'Christomonism' and so neglecting the role of the third person of the Trinity in the mystery. It used to distress Orthodox that in the Roman Mass before Vatican II, and equally in the Anglican 1662 Communion Service, almost nothing is said in the prayer of consecration about the action of the Spirit. Fortunately the omission has now been corrected in more recent Western liturgical texts, both Roman Catholic and Anglican, and this is a development that we Orthodox greatly welcome.

The Eucharist is a participation not only in the bloody and triumphant Passover of the Lamb, but equally in the fiery tongues of the fiftieth day.⁶ The 'upper room' into which we enter at Holy Communion is not only the upper room of the Last Supper but also the upper room of Pentecost (Cf. Acts 1:13). If at the Eucharist there is a 'real presence' of Christ, there is also a 'real presence' of the Holy Spirit, different from that of the Son—for the Spirit did not become incarnate, and so has no

Body or Blood—yet no less genuine and dynamic. ‘Holy Communion’ signifies not only communion in Christ’s Body and Blood, but also ‘communion of (*or in*) the Holy Spirit’ (2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1)—a phrase which Orthodox liturgical texts repeatedly apply in a Eucharistic sense.

The Holy Spirit as Concelebrant

In the Divine Liturgy of S. John Chrysostom—the normal communion service of the Orthodox Church—there are four moments in particular when the working of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. The first comes after the Great Entrance (the offertory procession), in a dialogue between the deacon and the priest:

Deacon: Pray for me, holy father.

Priest: The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you.

Deacon: The same Spirit shall concelebrate with us all the days of our life.

Here is a remarkable idea, on which we shall do well to reflect at length when praying at the Eucharist: *the Holy Spirit is our concelebrant*. From one point of view, it is of course Jesus Christ who is the celebrant, the unique High Priest, not only the offering but the offerer: as the officiant says in the prayer before the Great Entrance, ‘Thou art he who offers and he who is offered’. But it is no less true that the celebrant at the Eucharist is the Holy Spirit. The Liturgy is in the last resort not so much our action as his.

The second moment comes in the prayer of consecration itself. After the narrative of the Last Supper and the Words of Institution, the priest elevates the Holy Gifts and offers them to God; and then comes what is for Orthodox the culminating and decisive point in the great Eucharistic prayer—the invocation or *epiclesis* of the Holy Spirit:

Send down thy Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts here set forth;
And make this bread the precious Body of thy Christ,
And what is in this cup the precious Blood of thy Christ,
Changing them by thy Holy Spirit.

It is not the priest who effects the Eucharistic consecration; the change is wrought by the Holy Spirit. It is the constant function of the Spirit, in all dimensions of the Christian life, to render the risen Christ immediately present and active in our midst, and this the Spirit does supremely and definitively in the Eucharist. It is in and through the Spirit that the

bread and wine become Christ's true Body and Blood. Our meeting with Christ in Eucharistic communion is always an encounter *in the Spirit*.

The ecclesiological consequences of the Spirit's descent upon the Eucharistic Gifts are emphasized in a prayer for the unity of the Church that follows the *epiclesis* in the Liturgy of S. Basil: 'Unite us all, who share in the one Bread and Cup, one with another in the unity of the one Spirit'. Here we see, directly joined together, precisely the three elements with which we are here concerned: Spirit, Church, Eucharist. The immediate effect of the Holy Spirit's descent at the consecration is to make us members of the one ecclesial Body through communion in the one sacramental Body. The Spirit at the Eucharist creates the unity of the Church. Unity is not guaranteed by outward means through power of jurisdiction, but grows from within through shared participation in the Spirit-filled Gifts.

A third pneumatological moment in the Liturgy comes immediately before communion. The deacon takes a vessel full of hot water (*zeon*) and empties it into the chalice. Whatever the original reason for this ceremony—unexpected and somewhat disconcerting to the Western observer—it is now interpreted in terms of the Spirit. As he pours the hot water, the deacon says: 'The fervour of faith, full of the Holy Spirit'. The physical warmth that permeates the sacramental elements is in this way understood as a symbol of the immaterial fire of the Spirit with which the Eucharist is energized. In the words of the fourth-century Syrian poet, S. Ephrem:

In your Bread is hidden a Spirit not to be eaten,
In your Wine dwells a Fire not to be drunk.

Spirit in your Bread, Fire in your Wine,
A wonder set apart, yet received by our lips . . .

See, Fire and Spirit in the womb that bore you!
See, Fire and Spirit in the river where you were baptized!
Fire and Spirit in our Baptism;
In the Bread and the Cup, Fire and Holy Spirit.⁷

Fourthly and finally, in their thanksgiving after communion the people sing:

We have seen the true light,
We have received the heavenly Spirit . . .

Communicating in Christ's Body and Blood we have received communion also in the Spirit. Here, as always, the Father uses both his

'hands' together. As S. Gregory of Nyssa insisted, 'Never think of the Son without the Holy Spirit'.⁸

The Holy Spirit supplies all things . . .

Between, then, the three realities Spirit, Church and Eucharist, there exists an essential interconnection, an unbreakable bond. The Holy Spirit of Pentecost—'everywhere present and filling all things', in the words of an Orthodox prayer—creates the Church and maintains it in being; and if we say that it is the Eucharist that creates the Church, then at once we need to add that the Eucharist is itself the work of the creative Spirit. As the Orthodox Church affirms in a hymn sung on Whitsunday:

The Holy Spirit supplies all things:
He causes prophecies to spring up,
He sanctifies priests,
To the unlettered he taught wisdom,
The fishermen he turned into theologians.
He holds in unity the whole structure of the Church.
One in essence and one in throne with the Father and the Spirit,
O Paraclete, glory to thee!

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Notes

1. *Against the Heresies* III, xxiv, 1.
2. *On the Sacred Anointing* 73 (Migne, *Patrologica Graeca* 155, col. 244D).
3. The theme of 'Eucharistic Ecclesiology' is one of the most creative elements in modern Orthodox theology: see, from the Russian side, Nicolas Afanassieff, 'The Church which presides in love', in John Meyendorff and others, *The Primacy of Peter* (London 1963), pp.57-110; corrected and modified, from the Greek side, by John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London 1985).
4. *Shepherd* 8,1 (*Vision* II, 4, 1).
5. *Against the Heresies* IV, xx, 1.
6. See Boris Bobrinskoy, 'Le Saint-Esprit dans la Liturgie', *Studia Liturgica* I, 1 (1962), pp.47-60; J.H. McKenna, *Eucharist and Holy Spirit: the Eucharistic Epiclesis in twentieth century Theology (1900-1966)* (Alcuin Club Collections 57: Great Waking 1975).
7. *Hymns on the Faith* 10, stanzas 8 and 17: trans. Robert Murray, *Eastern Churches Review* III, 2 (1970), pp.142-50.
8. *Against the Macedonians* 12 (Jaeger/Mueller, III, 1, p.98, lines 25-26).

The Charismatic Renewal in Perspective

BY JOHN GUNSTONE



IT IS over twenty years since the charismatic renewal began to be talked about—and experienced—in the different denominations. In this country it was the Fountain Trust, formed in 1964 by Michael Harper, that did most to help us understand the new movement. At first the renewal spread largely among non-Romans, but eventually Roman Catholics in Britain became involved, too. The ecumenical significance of this became apparent when Roman Catholics joined other charismatics in the big Fountain Trust conference in Guildford in 1971.

Those of us who were attempting to apply the lessons of the charismatic renewal to our own churches learned much from our Roman friends. Among the first Roman Catholic charismatics were a number of outstanding young scholars, so there was no lack of theological reflection on what was being experienced. Furthermore, Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, then Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, became a leader in the world-wide Roman Catholic charismatic renewal, and the movement in that church had the enormous advantage of his wise and prestigious oversight.

Theological reflection on and pastoral oversight of the charismatic renewal in other churches was not so forthcoming. I suspect this was because at that time many of our theologians and leaders were strongly influenced by the liberalism of the 'fifties and 'sixties, and they regarded the charismatic renewal as just another freak of American fundamentalism. It has to be said also that the charismatic renewal—like other religious movements—attracted its share of weirdies, and news about their sayings and activities made establishment churchmen cautious.

The 'seventies saw the formation of the charismatic 'service committees' in the churches, following the pattern laid down by the Roman Catholic charismatics (who even established a communications office in Rome). The idea was to provide a network of relationships between individuals who were trying to work out the implications of what they discerned as the leading of the Spirit within the tradition and life of their own denominations. After the publication of the report, *The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England*, commissioned by the General Synod in 1978, Anglican Renewal Ministries was set up in this

country with Lawrence Hoyle as its co-ordinator, to provide such a network within the Church of England. Other provinces of the Anglican Communion did the same.

Among those who attempted to apply the lessons of the renewal to their churches were some who found themselves frustrated and rebuffed. Their stories inevitably tend to be one-sided, but behind many of them I have detected insensitive pastoral care by local church leaders. No doubt young and enthusiastic charismatics are not the easiest sheep to watch over! But comprehensive denominations are not easy to live with either—especially those which give the impression of doctrinal and moral confusion. By the end of the 'seventies there was a trickle of young charismatics—including some clergy—from the denominations to the newly-formed 'house churches', and in the 'eighties that trickle became a sizeable stream. The house churches have become the fastest-growing Christian body in this country with a membership which is now reckoned in hundreds of thousands.

Does this mean, then, that the charismatic renewal has run its course? The answer to this depends what we identify as charismatic renewal. For some it means a movement in which groups of Christians meet to sing choruses and pray in tongues. If that is all renewal involves, then it will die out as yet another pietist movement, which doubtless helped some individuals but did little for the Church as a whole. But if we identify the renewal as a widespread movement of the Holy Spirit among God's people, recalling them to basic scriptural truths about being the Spirit-filled Body of Christ to live and proclaim his Kingdom in his world, then the charismatic renewal has hardly begun.

I think we can see why this is so if we try to discern where the Church might be led in tomorrow's world.

- (1) We are seeing the rise of what might be called 'ecumenical evangelicalism' as the dominant theology of the immediate future. That is to say, the majority of tomorrow's Christians will be seeking to follow Jesus Christ as a result of a personal response to the Gospel and a vision of their Church which takes its inspiration from the variety of lifestyles, ministries and missions presented in the New Testament. They will not be unaware of the theological problems which occasionally disturb us, but they will regard them as issues of secondary importance belonging more to the past than to the present. (Did other Anglicans feel as I have done over the last couple of years, that the 'Durham affair' was like re-living

what we had read about the 'Hereford affair' in 1917, when there were protests at the appointment of Henson who was well-known for his 'modernist' views on the virgin birth and the resurrection?) They will have a strong sense of the Christian commitment to justice and peace as well as to evangelism and church-planting.

This ecumenical evangelicalism (which is sometimes called 'the third wave'—the Pentecostal movement constituting the 'first-wave' in this century and the charismatic renewal the 'second') owes a good deal to the influence of charismatics, for it is in their ecumenical groups, rallies and conferences that Evangelicals (of all denominations) and Catholics (Anglican as well as Roman) have met, discovered Jesus Christ in one another, and come together in a realisation that they are 'one in the Spirit, one in the Lord'.

- (2) We are beginning to witness the break-up of the denominations as authentic forms of Christian community. What I mean by that is tomorrow's Christians are going to be less concerned about the denominational label which is attached to them and more concerned about what it means to be a disciple of Christ in their own day. There are already many (including Anglicans and Roman Catholics) who adopt this attitude. It is likely that denominations will remain as legal institutions for the payment of clergy and the administration of ecclesiastical buildings, but they will count less in the formation and spirituality of the majority of Christians.

Again, the charismatic renewal is one of the factors in the development of this attitude. As I have said, the renewal has been strongly ecumenical from the start; and its particular stress on sharing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit cuts across denominational borders and gives a wider and more powerful awareness of spiritual unity in Jesus Christ than the ecumenical movement ever succeeded in doing. Furthermore, an awareness of the diversity of the Spirit's activities helps the individual Christian to overcome those personal prejudices (rooted in denominationalism) which so often hamper growth in unity.

- (3) We are also witnessing the slow emergence of a Church dispersed throughout society rather than institutionally based on neighbourhoods, regions and nations. In this 'diaspora Church' the small group is becoming the basic Christian community for

many members rather than the congregation in the church building. The house churches lay great stress on the importance of the small group for pastoring and teaching their people, and this has proved an effective community-building pastoral unit in other parts of the world. In the last twenty years house groups (often ecumenical) have proliferated among the members of the denominations as well. Bodies like the Bible Society and Scripture Union produce large quantities of material for use in such groups.

This development requires many pastoral lay leaders, women as well as men, since obviously the ordained clergy are not numerous enough to provide such leadership. One of the outstanding features of the charismatic renewal has been the spiritual leadership given by lay women and men, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church. Clearly this is a vital factor for the future of the diaspora Church.

- (4) Although spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecies and healings are popularly associated with the renewal, undergirding these manifestations is the fundamental scriptural truth that being a Christian means living in the faith, hope and love that by his Spirit God can and will work through us in all circumstances for the purposes of his Kingdom. So often in the past lay people in the Church have tended to regard the work of the Spirit as channelled mainly through those who are ordained. The charismatic renewal (along with other movements, such as the Franciscan Third Order) has done much to refute this—not just in teaching but through personal experience (the ministry of prayer for healing has been one of the ways this lesson has been presented to ordinary women and men in the churches). The small group structure, often beginning as a charismatic prayer group, is ideal for the discernment, encouragement and maturing of those gifts.

Some Roman Catholic friends of mine say that their church will need a Vatican Three to prepare them for their mission as we approach the twentyfirst century. Such a council, they suggest, will have to reaffirm the nature and status of being a laywoman or layman in the Church of God, to adjust what Vatican One said about the pope and what Vatican Two said about bishops, priests and deacons. I guess that if such a council is summoned by a future pope, the charismatic renewal will be studied closely as one of the most important pieces of evidence that Christians can hope to live

in the power of the Spirit in this world, as the New Testament says they can. That is why it seems to me the renewal has hardly begun.

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'The Church that meets in their house' (Rom.16.5)

BY KENNETH LAWSON

'A new dimension in church experience?

I don't think so. Rather an opportunity to participate in the community of love and care that Jesus establishes in our midst —Love that becomes tangible, manifests itself in a warmth of feeling that seems lacking in our present society as a whole'.



IN THESE words, a member of a congregation to which I belonged struggled to communicate what was his experience of belonging to a House Group. Many of us have thus struggled to put words to our experience of this particular way of being the church. We have struggled because while much of our personal, interpersonal and spiritual growth finds its roots in the House Group, it is difficult to communicate the experience of struggling together to discover who we are, who our neighbour is and who is the God present in each of us and amongst us all.

House Groups are about Christian community—about belonging to one another, sharing with one another and learning to love one another as the people of God called to be, and to do the work of the kingdom, in the world.

The structure, form, leadership and activities of House Groups show great variety and so it is important to stress that what I write in this article comes out of my experience and is, by no means, a complete or even balanced picture. I am aware, for instance, that my experience as a parish minister and presently as a National Adult Adviser in the Department of Education of the Church of Scotland, is limited to the situation in Scotland and largely to groups within that Church. In Scotland there is no equivalent of the widespread and growing House Church Movement in England which is evangelical, often charismatic and, to a large extent, outwith the traditional denominations.

In Scotland, and I am sure in other parts of Britain, House Groups or House Churches are part of the life of a congregation—although often on the periphery. Many groups are ecumenical—perhaps part of the parish church but welcoming members from other denominations. Groups may be on-going or they may be of limited duration. They vary in size and purpose but all are attempts to harness the intimacy and the informality of the small group.

Many House Groups are *task* centred—e.g. they meet to plan a Church Fete; to raise money for a special project; to look after the fabric of the church; to prepare the Sunday School lessons or to fulfil some other identified piece of work.

Other House Groups are *topic* or *discussion* centred with their members meeting to learn about the Bible, Christian Doctrine, the Nuclear issue or to study a book together. The aim is to deal with a topic by opening it up and discussing it.

House Groups may also be *sharing* or *fellowship* groups where the main emphasis is on enabling members to share openly with, and to be the church to, one another and, together, to the wider community.

Most groups are a mixture of all three strands and whatever form they take, because they are part of the Church, House Groups need to share in and also reflect the purpose and contribute to the life, of the Church.

My experience of House Groups was gained first, in a New Town parish of 17,500 people and in a congregation the members of which did not know one another and so met on Sunday mornings as a gathering of strangers. We therefore set up five House Groups each in a different area of the parish with the aim of being 'fellowship' or 'caring and sharing' groups who did not have a hard and fast pattern but met to discover what it meant to be the Church in their area.

In addition to the experience gained in the parish I have also been involved in leading twice yearly, for the past six years, House Church Festivals for representatives of congregations who have House Churches/House Groups. Two basic pictures emerge from each Festival: 1) the variety of House Groups and 2) the discovery of a oneness, a being on the same journey.

Out of my parish and national experience I believe that every House Group must be, whatever else it is, a caring/sharing group—i.e. one which is person-centred. If this is true, the task and the topic are

secondary to the people and their relationship to each other. The group needs to be a community of love and group members need to discover bit by bit, fearfully and joyfully, how to love one another. This needs to be the context in which any task is performed or any topic discussed because the nature of the church is first of all a 'being' in which we hear what we must do and out of which therefore our doing comes. This reflects the gospel of the Incarnation, that God in Christ came to where we are and out of his being present, he acted. He called his followers 'to be with him and that he might send them out' (Mark 3.14).

The House Group meets in the Name of Christ, with him present and its focus is on those who are in the group; its purpose is to be the Body of Christ in the place where it is and to discover what it is called to do as a group, as a number of individuals and as part of the larger congregation and church. The group which seeks to journey, to discover, to learn to trust and love together, is a very dynamic kind of group and it is important that certain critical areas are noted.

The Nature of the Group

The House Group needs to be part of the church structure if at all possible. For its own sake it needs to be 'plugged in' to the whole Body of Christ, and for the sake of the church locally and more widely which can find itself challenged, renewed and envisioned by the group. The House Group has to be seen to be part of the Church and not a 'holy huddle' or clique about which all kinds of rumours may circulate. It needs to be open to explain itself and to welcome new members, if not into an existing group, then into a new one. Because there is an optimum number (around twelve) for a House Group, and because, if there is frequent coming and going of members in a group, the level of sharing diminishes, it is necessary to restrict numbers. This, however, makes it necessary to provide the opportunity either to join a group which has not yet reached the intended number of members or for a new group to be started.

The kind of group I am describing is a Growth Group, where 'rooted and grounded in love' people grow—emotionally, psychologically, socially and spiritually. Thus House Groups are about movement, newness, healing, wholeness, experiencing, learning, trying out new ways of relating.

It is important for a group to have *groundrules* which do not define the group but give it direction in its attempt to be the kind of group it has

decided to be. Groundrules which I have found helpful were learned from Phil and Phoebe Anderson (*The House Church*, Abingdon 1975).

They list 4 *Don'ts*:

Don't judge, because each person is his/her own best judge.

Don't interpret, because explaining someone else's problem is not usually helpful for them—they need the right enabling to find their own interpretation.

Don't problem-solve, because we never know enough to solve another person's problem. Each person in the group can be encouraged to discover that they have the potential and the resources to solve their problems—in the context of a caring group.

Don't rescue someone who doesn't need rescuing. Let each person feel what they are feeling and let them express their feelings in a way which is appropriate for them. Often we rescue a person who is expressing feelings because we are embarrassed and not as a way of caring for them.

The Andersons also list 6 *Do's*:

Be present. Learn how to be with each member of the group where he/she is. Try to feel what they are feeling and communicate your presence by listening, looking, touching and with as few words as possible.

Accept each other, just as God accepts us as we are. It is that very acceptance which gives encouragement to others to change and grow.

Listen to each other. Really listen to the words and to the feelings behind them.

Respond after you have listened—not by saying 'That reminds me of...' or 'Just wait until I tell you about...' or other similar phrases. Rather check out that what you have heard was what was meant and care for the person whether or not you understand or agree with what they have been sharing.

Encourage and support by enabling one another to find your own interpretations, solutions, decisions and ways of working through a problem. Ask—'How can the group help?' and encourage individuals to report back on their progress.

Confidentiality. This is of vital importance and must not be taken for granted. It needs to be stated that each person may share only their own story and no one else's—inside or outside the group. Any broken confidences must be dealt with firmly.

It helps a group to have a *Contract* as well as Groundrules. Each member of the group then knows clearly what his/her commitment to the group is—what is involved, what is expected and what each is offering to the others.

The House Group is three-dimensional—i.e. it has Inreach, Outreach and Upreach. In the group, as people share their joys and sorrows, their thoughts and feelings, and are accepted and cared for, they may discover new things about themselves, new confidence and new resources in themselves and new ways in which they want to relate. *Inreach* in the group is about caring for one another in the group and in that context the individual is able to reach into him/herself in hope.

The Group's *Outreach* is seen in that individual members, out of the strength and support they have received, reach out from themselves to the others in the group. The group as a whole also needs to look beyond themselves to the congregation and the community, to the Church and the World.

All of this reaching in and reaching out is part of an expression of the *Upreach* to God and a deepening relationship with him—not in an individualistic sense but as individuals within a community of faith and love.

These three dimensions cannot be separated from one another because to reach up is to reach in and out. The Kingdom is within us and amongst us and because the demand of living the life of the Kingdom is three-dimensional—'Love God... and love your neighbour—as you love yourself'.

Leadership

It must be obvious that if small groups are to be set up, leaders need to be trained, who will be aware of the potentials, pitfalls and problems of small groups and who have themselves experienced sufficient growth that they will be able to model the groundrules. Leaders need to be good listeners and facilitators.

Three basic styles of leadership can be identified in society—authoritarian, permissive and democratic. What is needed in the House Group (and elsewhere) is another style which may use elements from these three but whose aim is to enable each member to discover and to exercise his/her gifts of leadership, this has been called the Maieutic style—from the Greek word for 'a midwife'. Thus the leader of the caring group has highly trained and developed skills but is not the focus of the whole of

the group's attention. This kind of leader does not do all the work but encourages each member of 'the family' to play their part in that place of labour and birth, pain and joy, creativity and growth, which is the House Group.

Conclusions

In my experience the House Group whose 'doing' grows out of the kind of 'being' which I have described is a powerful Christian community. Its power does not seek to dominate but to liberate—a dynamic which changes lives, relationships, congregations, and a little bit of society.

Can you imagine what it would be like if the basic unit of the Church in Britain was the House Group—if the majority of church members belonged to such a group? Can you imagine what it would be like if our existing church groups, business meetings, leadership meetings, learned to be this kind of group, and conducted their business within this context? I believe it would be a re-formed, re-vitalised church.

The surprising thing for me is that there is nothing that is new here. The Church began as a group of twelve with a leader who so modelled the aim and groundrules of the group that, later, the network of groups which were born out of the original was called the Body of Christ. The church in the New Testament was a collection of House Groups which had similar problems and similar failings to those wrestled with today—yet it was the embodiment of the gospel.

In our day we do not need to re-invent the New Testament Church but we do need to see that the small group was the only structure Christ gave to the Church and the only structure the Church had during its period of greatest advancement and vitality. We have in the Church of the Twentieth Century many advantages over the infant church of the First Century but perhaps our lack of growth is due to having cut off our roots in the small, informal, intimate caring group meeting in someone's home.

The gospel is about love. It is about caring community, speaking the truth in love, trusting, sharing, struggling, forgiving together. It is about the God who accepts us as we are and listens to us to such an extent that he comes in flesh to be where we are and 'hears' in his body what it is like to be human. Out of that listening he responds in forgiving love and care which give value to each of us. He calls us to come together in love to model the Kingdom—the new society. I believe this communion of saints, this fellowship of the Way, is possible because I have experienced

something of the life of the Kingdom embodied in ordinary disciples like myself—'the Church that meets in their house'.

The Reverend Kenneth C. Lawson is National Adult Adviser (with responsibility for Group Relations) of the Department of Education of the Church of Scotland.

Will You Listen!

BY DEREK PALMER



THAT'S a demand and not a question! When it is very important to get something across to people, we want to pick them up, shake them, and say 'for God's sake stop talking; will you listen'!

At the moment we want to say to everyone—Church leaders, local clergy and ministers, Synods, Councils, as well as the man and woman in the pew, and the fringer—'for God's sake, will you listen'! The Spirit is saying something to the churches, to you in fact, and it is very important that you listen.

Of course, it's dangerous to say that, because every group feels that their particular insight is the vital one, and everyone else should listen to and act upon it. But can anyone seriously doubt that the Spirit is speaking to the churches, and speaking clearly and in a language we can all understand? The voices are delightfully different; some deep and powerful, some light and small; some with authority, others speaking from experience; some are old, some are very young; many of them are male, but gladly, some are female. Many are at the 'centre of things' but many also are out 'on the fringe' and beyond. And these voices are almost all saying the same thing, but with authentic variety, and welcome passion, and sometimes anger.

'It is time to be one—our church divisions prevent us from being the people of God, prevent us from effective and varied mission, and we are squandering our denominational and individual gifts, by keeping them to ourselves. Nothing less than the whole church can meet the needs of the whole world'.

Three Books — Three Conferences

These voices have been raised at Nottingham, Bangor and St. Andrews, with a delightful mixture of accents, from countries much wider than England, Scotland and Wales, at the Spring conferences of the 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' Inter-Church Process. They will be raised again in chorus in September, when the final 'All Britain Conference' takes place at Swanwick in Derbyshire. Of course, we hope that those who are at the conference will listen, but they are only representatives of the thirty-two churches that are involved. What of the rest of the members? Will they listen when we come to report back?

Before the voices were raised, the books were written. Three vital books, but without a single author! The three books have been written by thousands, no, tens of thousands of people, churches and groups. The views are owned by a million people, who in one way or another accepted the churches 1986 request to tell us 'What on earth is the Church for?' or, more formally, 'What is the nature and purpose of the Church in the light of its calling in and for the world?'

1. *Reflections* — Reflecting Convergence

The first book to be published by the British Council of Churches and The Catholic Truth Society, was *Reflections* which came out in September 1986, and twenty-six of the thirty-two churches gave their considered answers to the formal question. Some of them are predictable, some rather historical, some (if we are honest) rather dull, but with much that is new and exciting. For the first time churches are writing not for their own 'home supporters', but confessing to others how they see their church in its relationship to other churches. There is considerable honesty, some humility, and some willingness to listen, rather than to shout. The fact that these churches are together in 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' already indicates that they do not see the world's salvation as *solely* their responsibility; clearly they recognise that they have partners in the Gospel, and that they need each other.

Fruitful areas of disagreement show through, but it is impossible to read these reflections, or hear them spoken, and not be aware of 'convergence'. The very symbol being used by the 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' Process is three distinct but converging lines—even though the point of convergence seems to be still out of sight or off the paper! So the first book, the first set of voices, clearly shows recognition, appreciation, and a considerable growing together, despite many denominational

hurdles and hang-ups. The Spirit is blowing, but it is a fairly gentle ecclesiastical 'wind' and it is doubtful, if alone, it would get the good ship 'ecumenism' on to a new course.

In fact, it was not intended to, because the unique thing about 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' is that the voices that were asked to speak first were those of local church members. 'Instead of the hierarchies passing things down, this time we are trying it the proper way round—the local debate to be fed into the wider national reflection and discussion' (Archbishop of Canterbury).

2. *Views from the Pews* — Getting on with it

If *Reflections* is Force 5 on the Richter Scale of the Wind of the Spirit, *Views from the Pews* is Force 7 or 8, and its many voices have to be added to the official church ones, and they are all saying 'Will you listen!'

Views from the Pews and its accompanying video report *Lent '86* were published in November, and recount a remarkable story of church and media co-operation, of question and answer, and of clear lay voices with a great deal to say. A sample shows that every church and age group took part, but that the voices tended to be female and over fifty! They also tended to represent regular churchgoers and were in no sense just the extreme radicals. They are views from the pews, but not every single pew is represented, because by definition only a million took part, which means that something like five million churchgoers did not. But a million is a lot, and is worth listening to, and everyone was asked for their views.

Their replies both on the official questionnaires and in the unofficial reports, show a considerable loyalty to Christ and his Church, but one that is getting more and more strained and impatient and, in some cases, becoming angry; a laity that is not sure that all the 'official' answers make sense, or indeed are right. They are suspicious of much clerical language and theology, and find much in the church that obscures rather than reveals. They have little desire to quit their denominational allegiance, but see no sense in keeping the truth of that denomination to themselves, and they have learnt the vital lesson that for someone else to be different does not mean that that someone else is necessarily wrong.

They have discovered that other Christians are very much like themselves, and they want to know why they have to continue in parallel lines—in fact (though they may not use the words) they experience and

want practical convergence, and they want it locally and they want it now.

The second part of *Views from the Pews* comes from those places where people have not only spoken and listened, but already acted. So the views of forty-six County Sponsoring Bodies, Four-hundred-and-fifty Local Ecumenical Projects and Local Covenants, and six-hundred Councils of Churches are expressed by those who live, work and witness within these local unity schemes in all their variety. Here again exciting things are happening in towns, villages, estates and institutions. But there is also frustration and sorrow that the pace is still so slow. 'We have done the experimenting; we have shown it is possible; when are you going to believe us?' asks a Yorkshire Local Ecumenical Project. They are asking—demanding, 'Will you listen!' In fact, the growth of Local Ecumenical Projects, now five-hundred and twenty five, in the past few months, shows that many will listen, if they are given encouragement, hope and the opportunity.

3. *Observations* — Love/hate relationship

If the Spirit of God is blowing clearly through the official church responses (*Reflections*), strongly through *Views from the Pews*, it has gusts of up to Force 10 on the Richter Scale in the final publication of *Observations*. This was published in January, so may not be so well known. It needs to be. It contains the invited comments of groups, both within the official churches, on the fringes of them, and right outside them. One or two articles by Christian groups which feel they cannot take part in the Inter-Church Process because of their exclusive theological position makes very sad reading. However, we have to accept that this is their Christian witness, and for some it seems to be as essential that they must be on a course of *divergence*, as it is for the rest of us that we must now be on a course of *convergence*. But in the main, the replies in this fascinating book which are often critical of the churches, show a love/hate relationship which is hard to read without considerable sympathy, even if sometimes the demands of one group are contradicted by that of another!

One of the most carefully researched contributions (also published separately) is that of the National Centre for Christian Communities and Networks (NCCCCAN). They not only approached all their member groups, but held their own conference to prepare their response, and the diagram on Page 24 of 'Observations' almost led to blood being shed because of its critical and controversial relationship between some of the

communities and the church itself. Both in the NCCCAN, the Community Affairs report, the Christian Aid and CAFOD report, and in the unusual, but very important report on the Jim Wallace visit (which just got mixed up with 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' almost by accident!) the relationship of the small group and the national organisation of the church as a whole, raises profound questions, and yet it is just here that we must stop and listen to what is being said. God is not always to be found in the big battalions, or in the successful church, or in the thriving denominations. 'Small is beautiful'—'Personal is precious'—'and the prophet and the prophetic view does not always arise from the majority, but again and again in unexpected and sometimes unlikely places'. We may wish that it were otherwise, as it would be much more convenient and neat, but the facts have never supported this view, and certainly do not do so today. The alternative society, the small community of prayer, the base community, all speak of God's spirit blowing through them.

Koinonia and Kingdom

The final contribution, in this mixed bag of various and contrasting views, is that of the theologians. They are not everyone's favourite or easiest readings, but it is absolutely clear they have a vital contribution to make, as does the report from the theological colleges responsible for training the next generation of theologians and ministers. Theological insights must be listened to, just as much as social activists. In a fascinating lightening tour of some of the inter-church dialogues which affect the churches in the 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' Process, a group of theologians give us the headlines, and these can be conflated into three:-

1. The churches are listening to one another, and they are on a theological convergence course, though still separated by language and history, and some are more willing to listen than others.
2. One of the strongest and clearest views of the nature and purpose of the church, coming through the dialogues, is that which is best expressed by the Greek word 'Koinonia', and when the fullness of its meaning is explained in terms both of 'communion' and 'fellowship', it may well represent a place of growth and agreement.
3. The other clear picture of the church is as 'a foretaste and embodiment of the Kingdom', and again if it is possible to bring together church and Kingdom theology, this would be a massive

undergirding of so much which has been expressed through others in the Inter-Church Process, and especially in the insights in *Views from the Pews* and other entries in *Observations*.

Together at all levels

Three very different books, three very different spring conferences—but is there not a similarity which is more than co-incidental? Can we dare to say that 'the same Spirit, who is Lord both of the church and Lord of the world, is speaking both to his church and to his world, but will they listen? And this is a big question and a real question. If at the end of this year of 1987, when the first part of the 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' Process ends, we just file away the papers, say 'how interesting' but do no more, we deserve to be picked up by the Spirit of God, and shaken, and this could well happen!

But even if not everyone listens, many will, and of course it will be much easier if the church leaders, the Synods and the Councils of our churches in 1988, listen and then move forward with new courage, insights and even some new structures. But what is also clear is, even if this does not happen at top level, much is already happening at the national, county, local and the base level. Mistakes will be made, but if this is of God, can we not trust him to guide us into a church renewed for mission, active in love, and caring at all levels, and showing forth the unity of Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit and the love of God the Father?

Writing in the 1986 summer edition of *One in Christ*, John Thorton SM quotes an English priest, 'Are we taking ecumenism seriously enough? Christ's Body is divided, and we should be bleeding.' For God's sake, will we listen!

The Reverend Canon Derek Palmer is Home Secretary of the Board for Mission and Unity, and Associate Secretary of the Inter-Church Process 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims'.

'Reflections' – Price £2.95

'Views from the Pews' – Price £2.00

'Observations' – Price £2.95.

Available from Publications Department, or
British Council of Churches,
2 Eaton Gate, London SW1W 9BL.

The Catholic Truth Society
38 Eccleston Square,
London SW1V 1PD.

We die daily. Happy those who daily come to life as well.

GEORGE MACDONALD (1824—1905)

Books

Challenge and Encouragement

Open to God. By Brother Bernard SSF. Fount, London 1986. pp.xiv + 173. £2.50.

There are religious books which, rather in the manner of a smooth drink, slip down the throat easily, requiring little energy for their consumption and which leave a temporary warm feeling inside; these are pious books on the whole. I'd rather expected this of Brother Bernard's book, working, I suppose, entirely from the title. I found it altogether more challenging. It required much chewing and digesting, and left me feeling far more satisfied than would a smooth drink!

Bernard's is an unusual book, blending the life of Francis with something of his own life's journey and then going on to explore the inheritance left by Francis. So we are reminded of Francis' extraordinary awareness of God, of his life rooted in the eucharist and solitary prayer, and of his overbrimming sense of the love of God. Alongside this we are challenged by his radical obedience and self-discipline, by the power of his missionary impulse (both in proclamation and through engagement with the world), and ultimately by his willingness to accept suffering and death as a mark of the Christian way. The final challenge is the choice between total trust

in God or remaining enslaved to the values of the world. In all this, Bernard's writing breathes both realism and unaffected humanity. His treatment of conversion as a continuous requirement throughout our lives and not a 'once-off' experience, is reinforced at the end of the book, when he muses on the partiality of our response to God. Far from removing the challenge, this keeps us earthed and reminds us of our daily need to respond to the gospel. His use of the Franciscan texts is rich and exemplary. There are points, when the very variety within the book takes one unawares. The references to the Society of S. Francis, for example, excellent in themselves, feel slightly intrusive in the flow of his discourse.

Each reader will come away with different challenges, different points of encouragement from this book. My abiding feeling was of the atmosphere of an evangelical catholicism, embracing the world, yet never cut loose from the source of our being in God. Here is a meal, which will nourish many and cause them to ask for more.

STEPHEN PLATTEN
Portsmouth Cathedral.

Story of a Story-Teller

Richard Hughes: Author, Father. By Penelope Hughes.
Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1984. 194 pp. £10.50.

Having elbowed its way into a list of previously planned reading priorities, this book became 'unputdownable'. And this review will describe why it exerts such a benign yet tenacious hold on the reader.

Firstly, it is the biography of a writer of best-sellers, to name *A High Wind in Jamaica* among others, and it is written by the author's daughter, Penny. It is therefore doubly interesting, because it

looks at the story of a story-teller through the eyes of an acute observer who subsequently, for inevitable reasons, becomes part of the story. She has inherited her father's power of noticing and describing things. Even those that are just out of the picture. Many phrases chosen to describe Richard Hughes are equally applicable as descriptions of the autonomous life of the book itself. For

example, Penny writes '(He was) moving in his mind among infinite webs of interlacing timescales'. We are told that Richard Hughes was aware of this phenomenon, but Penny's description of his early life, her early life, his capacity to retain the enthusiasms of childhood even when involved in the executive 'adult' world, and the way in which a story can hold a child if it is deep enough, gives this book its paradoxical aura of timelessness focused in innumerable unrepeatable moments. When Richard Hughes was dying, the family took it in turns to read familiar novels to him and 'he would whisper to himself the names of people about to enter the story'. And the author's writing is so rich in allusive implication that she, likewise, manages to portray an awareness of 'people about to enter the story'. Throughout her writing there is a sense of things seen but unseen, heard though unheard, known yet unknown, which would justly enter the story had we but world enough and time. The reader is always aware of the confluence of the story, as it is told by the story-teller, and the story of the story-teller himself.

Second, the author has 'physiognomic perception' developed to a high degree. This is the quality of attributing life to inanimate things. It means that the outer world is thereby endowed with vitality and energy, so that it reflects and expresses that which energizes the observer's inner world. The reader would find it interesting to discover the range of words chosen as adjectival of darkness, I will name 'furry', 'cluttered' and 'mysterious' by way of a starter. Anthropomorphism is evident in abundance. Phrases such as 'the hills were still waist-deep in cloud' and the use of unusual adjectives transmit a sense of being utterly alive in a living world. The present author who can evoke 'the liquid call of the curlew' describes her father, another author, who conveys life because he experiences it.

Third, this book is provocative. It is deep and inferential without degenerating into obvious pieties or faded metaphors. 'For my part I flirted deliberately with fear, as an antidote to deeper fears'. This was Penny's experience which had a transgenerational link with a comment she made about her father, who had a 'private and passionate affair with the sea, a feeling that without the danger it provided he was only half alive'. Theological themes and insights surface in many places. Thus we are told that 'Liturgy' in Ancient Greek was a word which covered everything from fitting out and manning a trireme to putting up a triumphal arch at your own expense.

The book is also very funny, in a startlingly idiosyncratic way. An account of the difficulties of sailing a boat that seemed to have a mind of its own, comes to us as follows: 'we decided that the two of us would take it in turns to do the thinking and the pulling, so that the one who was thinking should have both hands free to think with'. Or again, she tells us how her father had been able to trace his family line back to 'Goneril, daughter of King Lear; and also via Caesar's friend Brutus, to the goddess Venus'.

The reader may be confused by this review to the extent that he is uncertain whether the quotations come from Penny or her father. At least I hope this confusion exists. Because such invisible loyalty is not limited to that of a previous generation, but also to that which is primordial and archaic within all generations. Penny tells us that when she was a little girl she and her brother 'made up prayers and hymns which at once became for us very ancient'.

The sense of timelessness, within a specific setting of time and place, which features throughout the book, also implies that this review is still timely though it is written three years after the publication date.

It will not surprise the reader to know

that this book is 'highly recommended'. Without a doubt, it will elbow its way into the priority reading list of future readers, just as it did to mine. There can be few biographies which have as their opening sentence one which is as compelling as that chosen by Penelope Hughes, author and daughter, as she writes on *Richard Hughes: author and father*:

'My earliest memory of my father is of sitting on his head, trying to hold him under water'.

A review is usually intended to have at

least a component of 'constructive criticism'. I have just two comments to make in this direction. The excellent photograph of Richard Hughes on the dust jacket will sooner or later become detached, torn and lost. I would suggest that it is also made a 'frontispiece' in the reprint which is bound to follow. The other comment is simply that Penelope Hughes should write and publish more. It is in her blood.

MURRAY COX
Tertiary.

Not Doom but Hope

Belfast's Bleak House. By Brother David Jardine SSF. Marshall Pickering 124 pp. £1.95
Ten years' work in a Belfast prison has given Brother David Jardine a rare understanding of life 'inside' and the pastoral opportunities given to a chaplain. In this second book he shares his story with stronger personal convictions and clearer professional aims. He writes in an easy, conversational style and fills every page with human stories, both of success and failure.

His chapters on Intercession and Offering God's Love make a strong impact, emphasising the need for both a ministry of encouragement and the backing of prayer groups. The conversations he recalls with members of paramilitary organisations can be starkly real: 'It's a terrible thing, this hatred, it just eats you up inside' (p.48).

This is an authentic account of the

bottom line of reality in Northern Ireland and a helpful book for those wanting to gain a closer, ground-level knowledge of basic Ulster attitudes. As a Franciscan Brother called from the ranks of the Church of Ireland, Brother David conducts you through the gates of the Crumlin Road Prison into scenes of Christian encounter, challenge and fellowship where the Spirit has undoubtedly borne fruit. In that sense the book is not well titled, for its message is not so much of doom but of Hope.

Copies are best obtained from S. Francis House, 75 Deerpark Rd, Belfast, 14 for £1.95 (post free in UK) or included in the SSF pack *Promoting informed prayer for peace in Northern Ireland* for £2.95 (post free in UK).

ROGER DAMIAN S.S.F.

Black Experience

Fire in my bones. By Charles H. King Jr.

William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1986. £6.95. ISBN 0-8028-3570-8

This revised edition of a book first published in 1983 is a very readable account of black experience in America, an experience which can lead Charles King to write, 'What we might have become, we are not. What we are now is only half of what we might have been'. Sensitivity to such experience is an urgent need, and not only

in America. He describes the path that led him to evolve his 'Black and White Encounter' programme and to found the Urban Crisis Centre in Atlanta. Here is a man who has learned to use his anger at his own and his people's experience and to make it into a channel for reconciliation.

A SISTER C.S.CI.

Books Received

The Reviews Editor gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following publications: *A Doorway to Silence*, by Robert Llewelyn, D.L.T.; *In The House of The Lord*, by Henri Nouwen, D.L.T.; *Lent for Busy People*, by Shelagh Brown, BRF; *Life in Christ*, by Graham Leonard, Mowbrays; *Love and Life's Journey*, by Mark Gibbard, Mowbrays; *Our Daily Prayer*, by Dermot Hurley, Collins; *Serving Jesus*, by James Jones, BRF; *The Divorced Catholic*, by Edmund Flood, Fount Paperbacks.

Dates For Your Diary—1987

6 June	Children's Day , Alnmouth 12.00 noon—4.00 p.m.
13 June	Open Day , Compton Durville 12.00 noon Eucharist
4 July	Open Day , S. Francis School, Hooke (Bus from Dorchester South Stn.—please inform the School Bursar if you intend to go)
11 July	Summer Festival , Hilfield 2.00 p.m.—6.00 p.m.
11 July	Summer Festival , Scunthorpe 12.00 noon Eucharist
31 July to 10 August	Families' Camp , Hilfield (Details from Mrs. Elizabeth Stirling, 14 Redmiles Lane, Ketton, Stamford, Lincs. PE9 3RD)
14—24 August	Youth Camp , Hilfield (Details from Brother Philip Bartholomew)
19 September	Stigmata Festival , Hilfield
19 September	House Festival , Newcastle-under-Lyme
3 October	'Celebrating Francis' , London
5 October	Franciscan Northern Festival , Alnmouth
8 October	Franciscan Festival , Belfast
17 October	'Instruments of Peace' —Spirituality & Peace, Hilfield
24 October	Day for Third Order and Companions , Alnmouth
12 December	Quiet Day in preparation for Christmas , Hilfield 10.00 a.m.—4.00 p.m.

Please contact the house concerned for further details of the above events.



Angela Mary, C.S.F., talking with the late Bishop Bill Lash during a
Conference.

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